

# **TAMILAGAM**

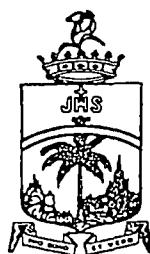
## **AD 300 - AD 600**

*Thesis submitted for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the  
Bharathidasan University*

By

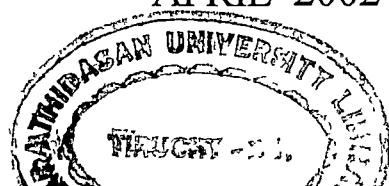
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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled '**TAMILAGAM AD 300 - AD 600**' submitted to the Bharathidasan University for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy is a bonafide record of the research work done by K. VENI DEVI under my guidance and supervision.

This is to certify that the thesis represents her independent original work and has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other titles in any other University.

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## **DECLARATION**

I, K. VENI DEVI, hereby declare that this thesis '**TAMILAGAM AD 300 - AD 600**' is a product of my research work done for the award of Ph.D. Degree and it was not submitted either in part or full to any other Degree or Diploma elsewhere.

Tiruchirappalli

  
Signature of the Candidate 16-4-2002.

## **PREFACE**

The thesis Tamilagam AD 300 – AD 600 is an attempt to bring back to life the three hundred years of history of Tamilagam that was in darkness and restore the missing link to give continuity to the history of Tamil Nadu. This work is done with the good wishes and support of my respected elders and peers and also friends.

I thank the Vice-Chancellor of the Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli for permitting me to do this thesis under the Bharathidasan University.

I express my gratitude and also thankfulness to Shri R. Panchapakesan the Secretary of Seethalakshmi Ramaswami College, Tiruchirappalli and Dr. T.S. Jani Bai the Principal of the College for providing all facilities in the college to do the research work and also for permitting me to avail leave under FIP.

I am thankful to the University Grant Commission for giving me the opportunity to utilize the benefit of FIP and also for sanctioning a contingency grant of Rs.10,000/-

I had the opportunity to join St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli as a research student and I place on record my sincere thanks to the Principal of St. Joseph's College for offering all facilities to do the research work.

I am in dearth of words to express my sentiments towards my guide Professor Dr. N. Arunachalam, the retired Professor of History, St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli. But for his able guidance, kind hearted nature, humanist approach and readiness to support in distress it would not have been possible for me to complete this research work. I owe a lot to him and this would be ever remembered with gratitude.

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The unfailing support and encouragement of my mentor and preceptor Dr. R. Kalaikkovan, Director, Dr. M. Rajamanikkanar Centre for Historical Research, Tiruchirappalli had given me the impetus to venture into this thesis work. I am grateful to him. I remember with gratitude the services of Smt. Dr. Avvai Kalaikkovan and Miss. K. Kundavai.

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I am thankful to Dr. Prema Nandakumar a profound scholar and the visiting professor Calicut University, Kerala for providing me the materials of the seminar conducted at Stockholm, Sweden on the epic Manimekalai and also for her valuable suggestions.

I am thankful to the faculty of Tamil Department of Seethalakshmi Ramaswami College, Tiruchirappalli who have helped me with books and written materials.

I am grateful to the teachers of my own department (History) whose understanding, cooperation and assistance had reduced my work load in the department and enabled me to go ahead with the research.

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Mrs. P. Pushpa Mohen of Nutrition and Dietetics department and Miss. M.S. Vasantha of Commerce department, Seethalakshmi Ramaswami College, Tiruchirappalli had taken care of so many of my personal needs and they are very much behind the successful completion of the thesis.

I express my sentiments towards my brother D. Raphael who took the biggest responsibility of printing and binding this thesis to the present shape which was done with a loving care. I remember with gratitude Mrs. Rita Raphael and the family for their pleasant disposition whenever I visited their home in connection with the thesis work.

I express my sentiments towards Shri K. Hari and Mrs. Sowmini Hari who are behind me in all my endeavours. The good wishes of my family members and the support given by them had enabled me to successfully complete this work.

I am grateful to Shri. Pushpa Raj, office staff of St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli who had extended a helping hand in all the official matters.

I thank my dear students Ilamathi, Devanayaki and Kanjana for their helping nature.

Children can bring heaven to earth. The company of the little girl Mitra was refreshing in very many occasions and she means so much to me.

பயன்தாக்கார் செய்த உதவி நயன்தாக்கின்  
நன்மை கடலிற் பெரிது

With these words of the Tirukkural I gratefully record here the irredeemable debt I owe to every one associated with this work.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ARE      Annual Report on Epigraphy

EI      *Epigraphia Indica*

p.      Page

pp.      Pages

SII      South Indian Inscriptions

Vol., Vols.      Volume, Volumes

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# **INTRODUCTION**

## Chapter I

# INTRODUCTION

The period between 300 BC and AD 300 is generally accepted as the age of Sangam by scholars<sup>1</sup> who have worked on the History of this period in Tamil Nadu. Tiruvenkatam in the north, Cape Comorin in the south with the seas on the either side that is the east and the west constituted the boundaries of Tamil Nadu during this period.<sup>2</sup> Tamil Nadu then was ruled by three major dynasties i.e. the Cheras, the Cholas and the Pandyas and also certain other minor chieftains who were holding pockets of territories in different regions. The Sangam literature is full of rich information about these rulers and also about the Tamil society in general. The archaeological excavations and the findings are supportive of the historical facts that are provided by the literature of the time.

The Cheras who ruled the western region of Tamil Nadu had their capital at Vanji.<sup>3</sup> Tondi and Musiri were their chief ports. Padirrupattu, one of the eight anthologies (*Ettuthogai*) of Sangam literature narrates in detail about the Chera kings. Among the Chera kings Imayavaramban Neduncheralatan exterminated the Kadambas who were involved in sea piracy in the Arabian sea and the symbolic tree of the Kadambas, '*Kaval Kadambu*' was cut down by the Chera and he hoisted the flag of victory. Neduncheralatan went on an expedition to the Himalayas and had overrun the rulers there. He had successfully inscribed his royal symbol bow at the foot of the Himalayas as it had been done by his ancestors. Though the event is considered as a poetic exaggeration found in *Padirrupattu* it only suggests the valour of the king. It is said that the countless booties that he had collected from the vanquished rulers during his northern expedition

were spread over in the court yard of his palace.<sup>4</sup> Senguttuvan who was considered to be the most renowned among the Cheras is described as "Kadalpirakkoti Gangaipperiyarrukkarai<sup>5</sup> pogiya" (குடல் பிறக்கோட்டி கங்கைப் பேர்யாற்றுக் கரை போகிய) Senguttuvan. From this long title it is understood that he had wiped out sea piracy through the strength of his navy and he also went on a successful expedition towards Ganges. Peruncheral Irumporai the son of Selvakkadungo Valiyadan who is referred to in the inscription of Pugalur was victorious in the battle against the combined strength of the Cholas and the Pandyas. This particular victory of Peruncheral Irumporai is celebrated in the poem *Thagadur Yatirai*.<sup>6</sup> His son Ilancheral Irumporai won over, Komperumcholan, Ilampalaiyan Mara Pandyan and Vichchi a minor chieftain and this is known through Padirrupattu.<sup>7</sup>

The fertile *Kaviri* belt which comprises the central part of the Tamil Nadu was ruled by Cholas whose capital was Uraiyyur. In the region where the river *Kaviri* mingles with the sea was situated Puhar the chief port of the Cholas. The title like Sembian and Valavan are associated with the Cholas.

The most illustrious ruler of the Chola dynasty was Karikal Peruvalattan. As the title Peruvalattan denotes Karikala had cleared forests and made the environment suitable for habitation and improved irrigation facilities and contributed for the growth of agriculture.<sup>8</sup> This contribution of the king finds a reference in the Sangam work *Pattinappalai* which is an eulogy on Karikala. *Pattinappalai* says that Karikala renovated the capital city Uraiyyur and raised the embankment on either side of the river Kaviri.<sup>9</sup> He had destroyed the Cheras and the Pandyas and eleven Velir chieftains at Vennipparantalai<sup>10</sup> and also nine other feudatory chiefs at Vagaiparantalai.<sup>11</sup>

Pattinappalai refers to Oliyar, Arava nadu and Ilangovelir who were won over by Karikala. Like Karikala Nalankilli was another Chola king who had been victorious against the Cheras and the Pandyas.<sup>12</sup> Kulamurrattuttungiya Killivalavan had occupied an important place in the history of the Cholas. He enjoys the credit of being sung in a number of poems in *Purananuru*.

The southern part of the Tamil Nadu was ruled by the Pandyas whose capital was Madurai where an academy of learned scholars flourished. They contributed for the growth of Tamil language and literature. The chief port of the Pandyas was Korkai. Pandyan kings are referred to as *Valudi*, *Maran* or *Chelian*.

The Sangam work *Maduraikanchi* which eulogises the Pandyan king Talaiyalaganattuchcheruvendra Nedunchelian mention about the exploits of this king. *Maduraikanchi* describes that as in the standing position without moving an inch Nedunchelian was able to win over the Cheras and the Cholas and the five minor chieftains who had surrendered him in the battlefield of Talaiyalanganam.<sup>13</sup> The kings defeated by Nedunchelian at Talayalanganam were Cheran, Sembian, Didiyan, Elini, Erumaiyuran, Ilangovenmal and Porunan.<sup>14</sup> Apart from Neduchelian, *Maduraikanchi* refers to two more Pandya kings who are Nediyon alias Vadivalamba Pandyan<sup>15</sup> and Palyagasalai Mudukudumipperuvaludi<sup>16</sup> respectively. Among these two rulers Mudukudumipperuvaludi conducted a big *yaga* and Korkaikilan Narkorran the brahmin who performed the *yaga* was granted the village which was named after the event as Velvikudi. *Purananuru* blessed the king and said that he should live long like the sand of the

Pagruli river.<sup>17</sup> Aryappadaikadanta Neduchelian is well known through the popular poem that was composed by him in the *Purananuru* literature.<sup>18</sup> The value attached to education by the king is known through this poem.

Apart from these three major dynasties who ruled from three different regions, Tondainadu was ruled by Ilantiraiyan who was called as Kachchikavalan. Tiruvenkatam hills constituted the northern boundary of Tondainadu and beyond that Vadugar nadu was existing.<sup>19</sup> Began, Nalli, Ori, Kari, Aye, Adigan and Pari were the seven minor chieftains who are popularly known as *Kadaiyelu vallalgal* in the Sangam literature. Sangam works mention two more important rulers of the period. They are Nalliakodan of Oyma nadu and Nannan of Pali nadu.

The kings who ruled Tamil Nadu were enlightened and benevolent despots who primarily concentrated on the welfare of the people. This is known through the popular epithet "*Kudi uyara kon uyaram*" (குடி உயர் கோன் உயரும்) wisdom, truth, undaunted spirit in war, courage, bountiness, fairness in justice, encouraging and supporting the learned were the qualities possessed by the kings in those times.

The royal attributes mentioned in *Tolkappiyam* are army, flag, umbrella, drum, horses, elephants, chariots, soldiers and crown.<sup>20</sup> The king was seated on the throne and his court was called *Arasavai*<sup>21</sup> or *Nalolakkam*.<sup>22</sup> King's court had learned and experienced elders as administrators. The king who was present himself in the *Nalolakkam* conducted the day to day affairs of the country. Mostly court poets were engaged as messengers and a system of espionage was also in existence. The personal bodyguards of the king were called as *Perumudalar*.<sup>23</sup>

The king was in possession of the country with its enormous wealth and resources and he could utilise them in any way as he liked. But still the king inherited hereditary property. Literature of the period and other sources do not convey any definite idea about the income and expenditure of the state and the revenue system. But through the available sources it is understood that land revenue was the major source of income which was supplemented by the other sources like professional taxes, tariff through trade and commerce and spoils of war.<sup>24</sup>

During the age of Sangam, local government was classified as the government of the Nadu and that of the village or ur. From the term '*Nan pallur nattodu*' (நன் பல்லூர் நாட்டோடு) it is understood that a number of villages constituted a nadu. Through the Sangam literature it is understood that the villages as self-governing units were functioning well during the age. The members of the governing body of the village were selected by the system of *Kudavolai*<sup>25</sup> even in those days. All the secular activities of the village were conducted in *Manrams* and those pertaining to religion at Ambalam respectively.<sup>26</sup> The legal proceedings concerning justice also took place at *Manrams*.<sup>27</sup> All the local needs of the village were taken care of by the members of governing body of the village. *Maduraikanchi* refers to *Urkaval* system which was functioning efficiently in the age of Sangam.

The life of the Tamils were associated with the geographical and physical environment in which they were living. In this way the hilly region was *Kurinji*, the forest area was *Mullai*, the land with cultivable and alluvial soil was *Marudam* and the coastal region of the sea was *Neidal*. *Tolkappiyam* mentions only the above said four-fold divisions of the land.<sup>28</sup> Due to the failure of rainfall *Kurinji* and *Mullai* lost their original nature

and turned into dry *Palai* where life became very hard. These land divisions according to their nature came under six *Kalas* (Time) which was considered as *Muthaporul*. The deity, food, trees, birds, animals and the theme belonging to each of these land division came under *Karuporul*.

The relationship of man and his lady varied according to the nature of the land division in which they lived. In the hilly region of *Kurinji* the man and his beloved had a happy life with no displeasure and this life pattern was *punarudal*. In the densely forested *Mullai* land the lady had to wait for the return of her man and it was *iruttal*. In the fertile *Marudam* land life was easy without hardships and naturally they had time for conflicts and consolation and this life pattern was *ududal*. In the coastal region of *Neidal* the lady had to stay back and wait for the return of her man from the sea which was not certain and it was *irangal*. In the dry *Palai* land where life was risky the lady had no hope about the return of her man and it was *piridal*. This life pattern of the five geographical divisions came under *Uripporul*. Apart from these five behavioural patterns *Tolkappiyam* mentions *Kaikilai Tinai* and *Peruntinai*. *Kaikilai Tinai* is one sided love. *Peruntinai* was a situation in which a very young girl fell in love with an old man and it was an unsuitable relationship between a man and woman.

In the social life of the Tamils the relationship between the man and the woman was classified as *Kalavu* and *karpu* which are elaborately discussed in the *Tolkapiyam*. *Kalavu*<sup>29</sup> was a situation where the man and the woman were united and led a secret life without the knowledge of their kith and kin. When a man and a woman were bound together through marriage and led a family life with the acknowledgment of their peers and elders it was termed as *Karpu*.<sup>30</sup>

During the age of Sangam marriage was conducted in a very simple way. There was no place for elaborate rituals and ceremonies.<sup>31</sup> The elder members of the families of the bride and the groom took a prime role in performing the marriage. The marriage took place on the auspicious day of the moon uniting with the star *Rohini*. Sangam works do not mention about the practice of tying of tirumangalya or tali around the neck of the bride by the bridegroom. This practice should have come into vogue much later. Sangam works mention *Iympadai tali* (ஐம்படைத்தாலி) and *Pulippal tali* (புலிப்பல்தாலி) which were the ornaments worn by the children. The habit of man staying away from the wife and finding a life of ease and pleasure with a prostitute was quite common in those days. Through the Sangam literature it is understood that this habit was mainly found in the *Marudam* land. The practice of sati was also in vogue during the period.<sup>32</sup>

Rice was the staple food of the people.<sup>33</sup> A good number of varieties of paddy were cultivated. A particular variety of paddy called *ivanam* was sown in the hilly region. Along with rice cooked vegetables were also consumed as the major food. Meat was an important food item and the habit of drinking was common during the age.

The cloth worn by the people was indicative of their status in the society. The rich and the aristocrats wore a costly loin around the waist and had an upper garment.<sup>34</sup> A type of dress like the modern shirt was worn by men. People of the lower strata of the society were wearing only a cloth around their waist. There is no reference in the Sangam literature about women wearing an upper garment that covers the breasts. Women were accustomed to the practice of drawing *toyyal* which was a coloured liquid

akin to modern *mehandi* on their breasts. Both women and men wore different kinds of ornaments. Slippers were used and the word *cheruppu* is found in the literature.<sup>35</sup>

The pluralistic character of the society is known through the various castes that were existing. According to the occupation that was traditionally taken by the people the society had four major divisions as *Andanar*, *Arasar*, *Vanigar* and *Vellalar*. From the term *Izhipirappalan* (இழிப்பான்) found in the literature<sup>36</sup> it is understood that caste differences were existing. It cannot be presumed that the different groups in the society followed strictly their traditional profession. A Brahmin who was not proficient in Vedas undertook the work of making bangles.<sup>37</sup> Agriculture and trade formed the back bone of the economy and those who were involved in these occupations were able to earn the good will of the society. Though money was existing as the medium of exchange barter system was more popular.

Tamilagam was the abode of fine arts like music, dance, sculpturing and painting during this period. Sangam literature abounds in information about a variety of wind, stringed and percussion instruments used by the artists on different occasions. Tamil Nadu had expertise in the field of secular and religious architecture and also wood work.

The five-fold division of lands and the associated deities mentioned in the Sangam literature show that the people had faith in god and adopted different methods of worship. Temples were constructed as the places of worship and this is known through the terms like *Ambalam* and *Podiyil*.

An extraordinary aspect of Tamil culture was *Virundombal* (விருந்தோம்பல்) which was the pleasant way of receiving a guest.<sup>38</sup> The horses were led slowly without adhering to the torturous practice of beating them with a stick and this shows that non-injury to the living beings was also another fine aspect of Tamil culture.<sup>39</sup>

The Tamil society that was highly cultured gave utmost importance to education and the learned people enjoyed an enviable position in the society. Though the rulers were in conflict among themselves there was no hurdles for the poets and scholars to move from one place to another. Since the rulers of the major dynasties and also the minor chieftains patronised the learned, literature flourished well during the age. Tamils contributed for the development of certain refined thoughts and ideas like "*yadum ure, yavarum kelir*" (யாதும் ஊரே யாவரும் கேளிற்).

It has been viewed by scholars that the highly cultured society of the Sangam age as revealed by the literature of the period found a decay towards the end of the 3rd century AD. Excessive indulgence in the habit of wine and women are cited as the contributory factors for the fall of Sangam culture. It is believed that these habits sapped the mental and physical energy of the people involved in them and they became inactive. Kalabhabra invasion of Tamil Nadu created confusion in certain regions of Tamil Nadu and this incident is considered as another reason for the fall of Sangam culture.

## **Aim**

The period between the fall of the Sangam culture and the rise of Pallavas of Simhavishnu line and the Pandyas of the first Empire is called as the period of Kalabhra interregnum or dark age of Tamil Nadu. It is an unwritten part of the history of Tamil Nadu which is in oblivion. In order to fill-in this lacunae found in the history of Tamil Nadu an attempt is made in this work to present the history of the period with the support of available contemporary source materials and also those of a later age.

## **Frontiers**

The three hundred years of the history of Tamil Nadu between AD 300 and AD 600 has been taken up as the period of study for this research work.

## **PRIMARY SOURCES**

### **Literature:**

The history of Tamilagam between the period of AD 300 and AD 6000 is presented in the background of the Sangam culture which is briefly discussed in the introduction of the present work. Literary works of the Sangam age were consulted. The period taken for study marked the peak of the literary activities in Tamil Nadu. The two great epics of Tamil Nadu, *Chilappadikaram* and *Manimekhalai* and *Pathinenkizhkanakku* works that include Tirukkural belong to this period. An age which produced such a classical literature in Tamil cannot be branded as the dark age. Literature is the mirror of life and it reflects the age. While going through the original text of these works the researcher was able to come across a lot of rich materials about the socio-cultural activities of the age.

### **Epigraph - Copper plates and Inscriptions:**

The early Pallava rulers issued copper plate charters in Prakrit and Sanskrit. These Pallava copper plates served as the primary sources to build the political history of the dynasty. The copper plates of the Pallavas of Simhavishnu line and those of the Pandyas of Kadungo line were able to provide very rich information about the age. The lithic inscription of Pulankurichchi and the herostones of Chengam and Dharmapuri areas have come in a long way to reconstruct the political history of the period. As corroboratory evidence the inscriptions of the Gangas, Kadambas, Banas and some of the Telugu and Kannada inscriptions for example the Halmidi inscription of Sravanabelgola area were consulted.

### **Monuments:**

During the period taken for study Chola country was ruled by Kochenganan who was a ruler of calibre and wisdom. He had won over his rivals and also certain other minor chieftains. He is the author of nearly seventy temples that were built in the style of Madakkoil and are located in the Thanjavur - Kumbakonam region. These temples are dedicated to Siva and Vishnu. Nearly twenty such temples had been identified by Dr. M. Rajamanickkanar Centre for Historical Research, Tiruchirappalli. Field trips were undertaken to study some of these monuments with the support of the above centre. These trips were of immense value to write the cultural history of the period.

## **SECONDARY SOURCES**

The books and research articles of the reputed historians and scholars have provided very useful information to build the history of the period. To mention a few are the works of K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, P.T. Srinivasa Iyengar, Sadasiva Pandarattar, S. Krishnaswamy Iyengar, V. Kanakasabhai, K.K. Pillai, C. Minakshi, S. Gopalan, Vaiyapuri Pillai, M. Rajamanikkanar, K.R. Venkatraman, Iravtham Mahadevan, M.D. Sampath, Y. Subbarayalu, R. Nagaswami, Natana Kasinathan, Karthigesu Sivathambi and R. Veluppillai. The scholars mentioned above except the last two belong to Tamil Nadu itself. Other important books consulted were 'The Successors of the Sathavahanas in the Lower Deccan' by D.C. Sarcar, 'Philosophy of Buddhism' by V.R. Trivedi, 'A Survey of Indian History' by Sardar K.M. Panikkar and also the research articles presented and published on the occasion of a seminar conducted about the epic *Manimekhalai* at Stockholm the capital of Sweden.

### **Methodology**

The facts that are extracted from the available source materials are carefully examined in the proper historical perspective. An objective spirit is maintained while going through the sources. Literary works like *Chilappadikaram* and *Manimekhalai* should be handled with caution since they are imaginative and descriptive. The researcher should be able to make out the distinction between history and literature. This is the prime requisite that should be adopted while absorbing materials from literature. This point had been predominantly considered while approaching literature. The facts from literature can be substantiated with the support of evidences from

other sources. Such related evidences can check the veracity of the facts and improve the quality of research. This was also considered while going through the facts.

History is related to time and space and nobody can reduce the importance of chronology in history. A candid interpretation of epigraphical records has helped to some extent in deciding chronology.

The materials that lay scattered are sifted classified, correlated and logically analysed to present a qualitative thesis.

Three hundred years of the history of Tamil Nadu that covers the period from the post Sangam to pre-Mahendravarman I (AD 590 - AD 630) includes in three chapters, the political, the socio-economic and the cultural history of Tamil Nadu with an introduction and conclusion.

## REFERENCES:

1. N. Subramanian, *History of the Tamil Nadu*, Koodal Publishers, Madurai, 1978, p.38
2. K.P. Pillai, *Tamilaga Varalaru - Makkalum Panpadum*, Tamil Nadu Text Book Society, 1977, p.83.
3. There is a controversy among scholars regarding the location of *Vanji*. Some identify Karur as Vanji while others are of opinion that Vanji was situated in the western coast near Musiri. From the references found in the 11th poem of Purananuru, 93rd poem of Agananuru, the inscription of Pugalur, archaeological findings of Karur, hero stones it can be assumed that Karur was the ancient Vanji.
4. *Padirrupattu*, 11; 23-25
5. *Agananuru*, 15:19
6. K.K. Pillai, *Tamilaga Varalaru - Makkalum Panpadum*, p.171.
7. *Padirrupattu* 9: 3-8
8. *Pattinappalai* 283 - 284
9. *Pattinappalai* 285 - 288
10. *Porunaruppadaai* 143-148, *Agam* 246: 8-12
11. *Agam* 125: 8-10
12. *Purananuru* 31: 3-4
13. *Maduraikanchi* 125-129, *Agam* 175: 10-12
14. *Agam* 36: 15-20
15. *Maduraikanchi* 61, *Chilappadikaram* 11: 10-12
16. Ibid 259
17. *Puram* 9: 10-11
18. *Puram* 183

19. *Agam* 213: 1-9
20. *Tolkappiyam, Poruladikaram, Marabiyal* 616
21. *Porunararruppadai* 55
22. *Maduraikanchi* 523-529
23. *Mullaipattu* 53-54
24. N. Subramanian, *History of Tamil Nadu*, p.208-217
25. *Kalittogai* 37: 6-7, *Agam* 77: 6-9
26. *Tirumurugarruppadai* 225-226, *Agam* 251: 8, *Puram* 52: 13, *Pattinappalai* 167, 246.
27. *Porunararruppadai* 187-188.
28. *Tolkappiyam, Poruladigaram, Agathinai* 5
29. *Narrinai* 140, *Agam* 198
30. *Agam* 17, *Kuruntogai* 3, 40, *Agam* 15, *Puram* 12
31. *Agam* 86
32. *Puranamuru* 246: 11-15
33. *Agam* 33:1
34. *Puram* 189, *Maduraikanchi* 433-434
35. *Agam* 34:3
36. *Puram* 170: 5-6
37. *Agam* 24: 1-2
38. *Puram* 333: 8-13
39. *Agam* 134: 11-15.

**POLITY**

## Chapter II

### **POLITY**

Tamil Nadu had flourished well under the Cheras, the Cholas and the Pandiyas in the age of Sangam. Around AD 250 certain regions of Tamil Nadu had fallen under the sway of certain non-Tamilian rulers. The Pallavas who came from the north-east and the Kalabhras who migrated from the north-west<sup>1</sup> had entered Tamilagam and ruled with their headquarters at Kancheepuram, Madurai and Puhar respectively. The Cholas ruled from Uraiyur and Palaiyarakkai.<sup>2</sup> Apart from these major dynasties few minor dynasties like the Kongar, the Muttaraiyar and the Banas had carved out territories of their own and were ruling either as feudatories under the major dynasties or were ruling independently.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Pallavas**

The Pallavas started their career as military commanders of the Satavahanas who ruled considerably a large portion of Deccan between 230 BC and AD 200. The fall of the Satavahana empire had led to the rise of a number of independent dynasties. Among these dynasties Ikshavahuhs established themselves in the lower bank of the river Krishna. Vijayapuri was their capital. Pallavas captured Vijayapuri after vanquishing Ikshavuhus and further migrated to south.<sup>4</sup>

Pallavas had their capital at Kancheepuram and ruled a vast region in the northern part of Tamil Nadu and also the regions of Guntur, Nellore and Bellary at Andhrapada. The fourteen copper plates issued by the Pallava rulers between the period AD 250 and AD 600 were of immense value to

trace the genealogy of the Pallavas. Apart from these fourteen copper plates the Manchukallu inscription of Simhavarman who is identified as the first ruler of the dynasty, the Vayalur inscription of Narasimhavarman II, Velurpalayam copper plates of Nandivarman III were also supportive to build the Pallava genealogy.

Manchukallu inscription of Simhavarman I is considered as the most ancient record that has reference about the Pallava dynasty. The inscription refers to the grants made by the king to the *battas* of Jivasivaswami temple who had conducted a big *yaga* for the victory of the king. Though the inscription is damaged in certain portions the script very much resembles that of the Ikshavahus. This had made the scholars to assume that Simhavarman had captured the regions of Krishna and Guntur from the Ikshavahus and had stabilised the Pallava rule in these regions.<sup>5</sup>

The language and the script of Manchikallu inscription is almost similar to that of the copper plates of Mayidavolu and Hirahadahalli which are the most ancient among the Pallava copper plates. From this it can be presumed that Sivaskandavarman the donor of Mayidavolu and Hirahadahalli copper plates should have come to power after Simhavarman I. Since Sivaskandavarman is referred to in the Mayidavolu plate as *Yuvamaharaja* it can be considered that he issued this grant during the 10th year of his father's rule. This particular point had made the scholars to identify Sivaskandavarman as the son of Simhavarman I.<sup>6</sup>

It is possible that during the period of Simhavarman I the Pallava rule comprised Tondaimandalam in Tamilagam and Andhrapada and a portion of Karnataka. This view is ascertained by the fact that

Sivaskandavarman had issued his two copper plates from Kancheepuram and the lands granted by him were in Andhrapada.

Since the Manchikullu inscription of Simhavarman does not refer to Kancheepuram Pallavas would have occupied Kancheepuram at a later date to that of the inscription. Simhavarman I who had chastised the powerful Ikshavahus and paved the way for the establishment of the Pallava rule can be considered as a great hero. Through the Manchikullu inscription it is understood that Simhavarman I was a philanthropist and had a religious bent of mind. The *yaga* was performed perhaps to celebrate the victory attained by Simhavarman against the Ikshavahus.

### **Pallavas of Prakrit Charters**

Sivaskandavarman had earned the titles *Yuvamaharaja* in the Mayidavolu plates and *Dharma Maharajadhiraja* in the Hirahadahalli plates. Both these plates were issued by him from Kancheepuram. The Mayidavolu plates which mention him as *Yuvamaharaja* was issued in the 10th year and Hirahadahalli plates which praises him as *Dharma Maharajadhiraja* was issued in the 8th year. From this the scholars had inferred that the regnal year mentioned in the first copper plate as the regnal year of Simhavaraman who is considered as the father of Sivaskandavarman.

The Mayidavolu copper plates which mention that Sivaskandavarman granted Viriparam village in Andhrapada to two brahmins for the benefit of his victory, charity and long life and strength is in the Prakrit language and brahmi script. The king himself was the *anati* that is the executor of the grant. The grant was issued on an auspicious day

that is *Venirkalam*, sixth *paksham panjami* day. The copper plate accounts for the exemptions given in the *brahmadeya* grant.

Through the copper plates it is understood that Sivaskandavarman was the ruler of the Pallava dynasty and belonged to Bharadwaja gotra. The copper plates had given a vivid picture about the procedures adopted in executing a royal order and also the punishment meted out in case of the violation of a royal order.

Through the Hiradahalli copper plate it is understood that Sivaskandavarman had performed *yagas* like *Agnishtoma*, *Vajapeya* and *Aswamedha* which show the greatness of the king. Everybody respected the orders of this grand monarch who had given as charity gold, cattle and fertile lands. Sivaskandavarman had made to record the details of an earlier grant made to brahmins by one Bappaswamigal and the donated land was exempted from *pariharas* or taxes. The magnanimity and the charitable disposition of the monarch is realised through the above information in the plates. It should be particularly mentioned here that Sivaskandavarman had taken the responsibility of the grant by himself being the executor of the grant. The copper plates reveal so much about the character of the king. Kings made endowments for the sake of their *kula*, *gotra*, *dharma*, long life, strength, fame and also for their victory in warfare. This is evident from the copper plates of Mayidavolu and Hiradahalli copper plates.

The Gunapadeyam copper plates are posterior to Mayidavolu and Hiradahalli plates which is known through the language and letters of the plates.<sup>7</sup> These copper plates are three in number and were discovered at Gunapadeyam in Guntur district. The faded animal that is found on the

obverse of the seal of the ring that binds the copper plates is identified as *Rishaba*. A coin that was discovered at Kancheepuram had the same figures. The Sun, the moon and the stars that were inscribed on the seal are also seen in the coin.<sup>8</sup> Hence it can be assumed that *Rishaba* was the royal emblem of the Pallavas from the period of Gunapadeyam grant and it continued thereafter.

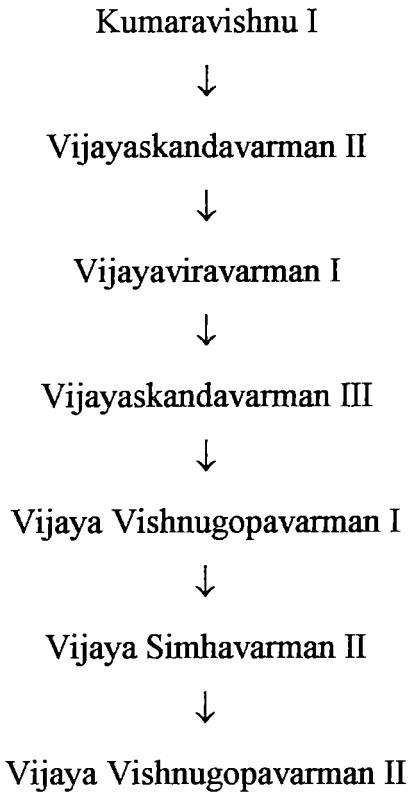
During the rule of Vijayaskandavarman, Charudevi the queen of *yuvamaharaja* Buddhavarman had endowed four *nivartanas* of land at Dalura as *devadana* to Bhagavan Narayana of Kuli magataraka Devakulam. This grant was made by Charudevi for the benefit of her long life and strength and was granted with the exemption of taxes. The land endowed was situated on the northern side of a well supplying drinking water and it was existing near Rajathataka. The afore said land was cultivated by one *Adugan*. Since the land was situated near the *Rajathataka* it can be presumed it might have been the property of the royal family. This grant had been made by Charudevi directly during the rule of Vijayaskandavarman and the order was issued directly to the royal officials of the Pallavas at Danyakataka. The rights and privileges enjoyed by the royal women is explicit from this grant. Charudevi would have assumed her position on behalf of her son after the death of Buddhavarman.<sup>9</sup>

Vijayaskandavarman who is mentioned in the copper plate is identified with Sivaskandavarman of Mayidavolu and Hirahadahalli grant.<sup>10</sup> It is possible that Buddhavarman was the son of Sivaskandavarman who might have had predeceased his father Buddhiankuram the grandson of Sivaskandavarman should have occupied the Pallava throne after him. With him the first phase of the Pallava rule that was started by Simhavarman I came to an end.

## Pallavas of Sanskrit Charters

The eight copper plates issued in Sanskrit by the Pallava rulers are helpful to settle the second phase of Pallava rule. Since all these copper plates are issued from the different regions of Andhrapada it is clear beyond doubt that Pallavas had lost Kancheepuram after Buddiyankuran. Since the Pallavas had lost their contact with the region of Thondaimandalam their rule comprised the regions of Krishna, Guntur and the border area between Tamil Nadu and Andhrapada. Some historians are of view that the Telugu Cholas, the Cholas and the Kalabhras were responsible for the Pallavas losing their hold over Kancheepuram.<sup>11</sup>

The eight copper plates issued by the Pallava kings are in Sanksrit. These copper plates were discovered at Ongole, Nedungarayam, Urvappalli, Vilavetti, Mangalore, Bikira and Sura. Out of these copper plates four are issued by Maharaja Sri Simhavarman from the places Skandavaram, Vijayadasanapuram and Vijayabaddukkara. He was the second Simhavarman of the Pallava dynasty. The same king had issued two more copper plates from the place of Palakkada. Maharaja Sri Vijayavishnugopa had issued a copper plate (Ongodu II) from Srivijayapalatkada. The copper plate issued by *Maharaja* Sriskandavarma from Dampraba is known as Ongodu I plate. All these copper plates which are in Grantha script<sup>12</sup> clearly give the proper genealogy of the Pallava dynasty.



The second phase of the Pallava rule began with Kumaravishnu I. Since Kancheepuram was lost by the Pallavas Kumaravishnu and his successors ruled Krishna and Guntur regions and the border areas between Tamil Nadu and Andhrapada.

The copper plate of Ongodu I which was issued by Maharaja Vijaya Skandavarman in his 33rd regnal year mentions Sri Kumaravishnu who had performed *Aswamedha yaga*.<sup>13</sup> This king who is referred to in three copper plates was noted for his enthusiasm, nobility and diplomatic planning. He possessed the physical structure and morale of a *Kshatriya* and adhered strictly to *Kshatriya* dharma. He possessed a kingdom that was attained through his valour and courage. He had all the respectable attributes that should be possessed by the king. He was highly disciplined and had a liberal mind.

*Maharaja* Viravarman is mentioned in seven copper plates. In three of these copper plates he is identified as the son of Sriskandavarman. He was a world renowned hero in warfare. The copper plates describe that he was in possession of qualities like morale, wisdom, undaunted courage to crush the enemies in battlefields, enthusiasm, nobility, diplomatic planning and other attributes of the king mentioned in *sastras*, an upholder of *Kshatriya dharma* and the most pious among the Brahmanas. He was a mahatma who was devoted to devotees, brahmanas, *acharyas* and peers. Through the strength of his arms and the enormous wealth that he had possessed, he was able to attain higher *bhogas* and was an incomparable hero of the world. The Pallava dynasty attained glory because of him.<sup>14</sup>

The next ruler Skandavarman is identified as the son of Viravarman, the grandson of Skandavarman and the great grandson of Kumaravishnu by the copper plates.<sup>15</sup> The king held an esteemed position because of his learning. He possessed wonderful qualities. He achieved fame through his victories in hundreds of wars. He adhered to the *acharas* that were laid down in *sastras*. He was knowledgeable which was achieved through the understanding of the *sastras*. He was good natured and possessed qualities that were attained through his steadfast *bhakti*. He was pleased to serve the god and *irupirappalar* (இருபிறப்பாளர்) who were Brahmins. He was considered as the fifth of *lokhabalas*. He took pride in protecting the people and possessed unfaulty wisdom and liberal mind. He earned the titles *Maharaja*, *Perarasar* and the *Mahatma*. He had performed a number of *yagas* and for him truth was life.

The Ongodu I grant was issued by Sri Vijayaskandavarman in his 33rd regnal year from his military camp at Damprabham in the third *paksham* of *hemantaritu* and *thratyodasi* day. The Ongodu grama was endowed by the king as *sathvika dana* to one Kulasarman who was a native of that place. This makes the qualities attributed to the king in the copper plate more meaningful. The *brahmadeya* gifted to Kulasarman was issued by the king orally to the royal officials and *Ayuktas* of Karma Rashtra.<sup>16</sup>

Sri Vishnugopavarman who finds a place in seven copper plates is referred to as *Yuvamaharaja* in six copper plates and Sura plates alone mention him as Maharaja. Service to mankind was considered as service to god by Vishnugopan and hence he protected the people and took care of their well being. He had immense desire to succeed in inheriting all the qualities of a *rajarishi*. Vishnugopan took effort everyday to uphold dharma that had fallen in the *Kaliyuga*. He was the best among the *bhagavatas* that is worshippers of Vishnu. The king who was devoted to Bappattaraka was the embodiment of truth and was polite.<sup>17</sup>

The one and the only Pallava king who singularly issued six copper plates is Maharaja Simhavarman II who was the son of Sri Vishnugopan. Since the copper plates of Simhavarman mention his father as *Yuvamaharaja* it can be presumed that Vishnugopan would have ruled along with his father Sri Vijayaskandavaraman and he would have passed away before assuming his independent rule. This would have resulted in Simhavarman ascending the Pallava throne. This can be inferred from the eulogy that had been showered on Vishnugopan in the copper plates.<sup>18</sup>

The copper plates issued by Simhavarman II in the 4th, 5th, 8th, 10th, 11th and 12th regnal years reveal him as a person devoted to Vishnu. The king who was devoted to Bappattaraka was also considered the most illustrious among the *bhagavatas*. Since cattle, gold and land were given as *dana* by the king it is said that he was always surrounded by the beneficiaries of this charity. Each and every deed of the king was concentrated on the enhancement of the well being of his subjects. The people who were in possession of all *mangalas* that came through the devotion to god were with the king. He was illuminated by the fame achieved through his victory. He had destroyed the *mandalas* of the neighbouring rulers. Simhavarman II was a great king and *lokhabala* who was interested in upholding dharma for the sake of the people.<sup>19</sup>

Simhavarman had gifted a number of villages as *brahmadeya* to brahmins and they were given for the sake of longevity in life, strength and victory. The first grant was made as mentioned by the king himself in the 4th regnal year on a *Vaisaka sukla panjami* day.<sup>20</sup> Ongodu, Nedungarayam, Bikira, Uruvappalli, Vilavetti and Mangalore were the six gramas located in Karmarashtra, Mundarashtra and Venkorashtra and they were gifted by the king. Among these gramas Vilavetti, Ongodu Bikira and Mangalore were made as *brahmadeya*. 200 *nivartanas* of land in Uruvappalli was given as *devabhoga* to the Vishnu temple built at Kandugur by his *senapathi* Vishnuvarman and Simhavarman had exempted sixteen different payments that were imposed on this holding.<sup>21</sup>

Yuvamaharaja Vishnugopa had granted Nedungaraya located in the Mundarashtra to Bhojakas Doddiswamy, Kannaswamy and Nandiswamy as *charaniya grama*. This had been confirmed by the king in his 12th year.

Simhavarman II and the kings who ruled before him endowed lands to the temples and such lands gifted to temples are called *devabhoga* lands.

Maharaja Srivijaya Vishnugopavarman came to the throne after Simhavarman II. Vishnugopan possessed all benefactions that came through his immense devotion to god. He was the one who was able to illuminate the world through the flames of his victory in innumerable wars. Vishnugopan who was the greatest among the devotees of Vishnu had endowed lands for the sake of his longevity in life, strength and victory. He had granted 108 *nivartanas* of land in the village Sura with all benefits to one Dasasamisarman of Guntur. One *nivartana* of land was given for building a house and maintaining a garden. The order that was passed by Vishnugopavarman from his seat Srivijaya Balathgadam was executed by the *gramattars* and *adhigaris*.<sup>22</sup>

Samudragupta invaded Deccan around AD 350 and defeated twelve rulers who confronted him. Samudragupta restored the kingdoms to them. Vishnugopan of Kancheepuram is one among those rulers. These details are found in the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta.<sup>23</sup>

It is possible that Vishnugopan the donor of Sura copper plate should be the Pallava ruler defeated by Samudragupta during his south Indian expedition. The Pallavas might have reassumed their lost powers at Kanchi during the rule of Simhavarman II the father of Vishnugopan. This can be sighted as the reason for Allahabad inscription identifying Vishnugopan as the ruler of Kanchi. In this background it can be considered that the third phase of Pallava rule with the recapture of Kanchi would have started with Vishnugopavarman.

Sivaskandavarman was the next ruler of this third phase of the dynasty who is known through the Chendarur plate issued by Kumaravishnu III. He had been eulogised as the matchless hero of the world and was in possession of enormous wisdom and energy. He occupied a commanding position and a number of kings were paying homage to him.

Velurpalayam copper plates mention Skandasishya who had captured the *Ghatika* of the brahmins from one Sathyasena. It is probable that this Skandasishya was none but Sivaskandavarman. The scholars are of view that this Sathyasena was either the son or *senapathi* of Prithvisena of Vakataka dynasty who had won territories in the northern region of Andhrapada.<sup>24</sup>

The Chola inscription in the Tirukkalukunram temple belongs to the 26th regnal year of Rajakesarivarman who is identified as Aditya I. The inscription gives information about the grant made by one Skandasishya. This Skandasishya should be the same king who had captured the *Ghatika* of Kancheepuram from Sathyasena.<sup>25</sup>

Kumaravishnu II who is identified as the son of Skandavarman in the Chendarur plate had proved his valour through his victories in a number of battles. Since the Velurpalayam copper plates mention about the recapture of Kanchi by him it can be presumed that either towards the end of Sivaskandavarman's reign or at the formative years of Kumaravishnu II's rule Kancheepuram was lost by the Pallavas.

Buddhavaraman, the son of Kumaravishnu II is described as a terror like *Vadavagni* to the Chola army by the Velurpalayam plates. From this it can be inferred that the Pallavas and Cholas were on war with each other constantly. In this struggle for supremacy there would have been an occasion where the Pallavas have lost the war in favour of the Cholas. In this context it is appropriate to mention here that Kochenganan emerged as a strong ruler of the Chola dynasty and had overpowered the rulers of his time.<sup>26</sup> It is possible that Cholas who were powerful in the beginning suffered a set back due to the continuous attacks of Kumaravishnu II and Buddhavarman and this enabled the Pallavas to reestablish their power in Kancheepuram.

The Pallavas who lost Kanchi during the time of Buddhiyankura were able to regain it during the reign of either Simhavarman II or that of Vishnugopan II. Due to the attack of Cholas, Pallavas had to again vacate Kanchi which had happened during the rule of either Sivaskandavarman IV or Kumaravishnu II. This was a temporary set back. Kancheepuram was again regained by the Pallavas under the rule of Kumaravishnu II and his son Buddhavarman. After this the Pallava rule was established well at Kancheepuram and the rule continued upto AD 900. The records give a clear picture about their rule.

Kumaravishnu II was good in protecting his subjects and was considered as the fifth of the *lokhabalas*. He had endowed gold, cattle and lands like his fore fathers. He was unassuming and supported the group that was following dharma.

Sri Buddhavarman who is described by the Chendarur plates as a king who possessed qualities that may outdo the qualities of his ancestors was liberal minded and devoted to god. Velurpalayam plates of Nandivarman III describe that he was *vadaragni* to the ocean like army of the Cholas. From this it can be inferred that Buddhavarman was in conflict with the Cholas. This conflict would have occurred when Kumaravishnu II and Buddhavarman were maharaja and *yuvaraja* respectively. It can be suggested here that during the reign of Kumaravishnu II Kanchi was regained by the Pallavas and the whole Thondaimandalam would have come under the hegemony of the Pallavas.

Kumaravishnu III who followed Buddhavarman to the Pallava throne was victorious in many battles. According to the Chendarur records just like his ancestors Kumaravishnu III possessed qualities like desiring victory for the sake of *dharma* and was devoted to god. Kumaravishnu III took unfailing efforts to uphold dharma which had fallen in the *Kaliyuga*. Kumaravishnu showed utmost devotion to the feet of Bappattaraka. Protecting the subjects was considered equal to the performance of *yaga* by him. In the Chendarur grama the king had a personal property of 800 *nivartanas* of land and out of this 432 *nivartanas* of land was donated as *brahmadeya* to Bhavaskandadradan who was living in Pullur grama. While issuing the grant the land coming under *devabhoga* was exempted. The copper plate is a clear evidence to know that certain portions of land were held as the property of the king. This grant was made by Kumaravishnu III in his 2nd regnal year in the month of *Karthigai Suklapaksham* fifth day.

The Vesandam copper plate of Simhavarman III refer to Srivijaya Viravarman who is compared to Devendra in his stature. The record says

that he had the courage and valour to subdue the other rulers and he could understand brahman which is the ultimate knowledge of energy and wisdom. He was followed by his son and successor Skandavarman.

The king who is referred to as Srivijaya Skandavarman by the Vesandam records is noted for his exploits. Vesandam plates say that he was the ruler of *Dakshinapada* who had established himself in the three coastal regions of the seas and was considered to be a wonderful person by the other kings. He had long stout hands like the proboscis of the tusker. Through the strength of his shoulders the king was able to protect the subjects. Just like the pleasant spring season he was pleasing to the eyes and minds of the people. Just like *amritam* and poison are mixed together the king had the qualities of kindness and anger. In this way Skandavarman's qualities are expressed in Vesandam plates. The Udayendram plates of Nandivarman II mention that Skandavarman was in possession of a stable *rajya* that was attained by the strength of his shoulders and he was the most proficient among those who had the knowledge of Brahman.<sup>27</sup>

Simhavarman III who is identified as the son of Vijaya Skandavarman by the Vesandam and Udayendram copper plates was devoted to god and was in possession of all benefactions that were bestowed on him. It is said that he was able to control the fire senses and also the mind. He had a stable mind that was equivalent to the unshakable *Mahameru* mountain. His affection towards the subjects was the same as it was for his own son. He was free from qualities like desire, lust and anger. He was a *Karpakavriksha* in patronising the learned, a place of refuge for *dhana* and the dwelling place for goddess Lakshmi. Udayendram plates

describe him as the supreme king and a person who had subdued all the other kings through his courage.

Skandavarman who is identified as the son of Simhavarman III by Udayendram plates had the opportunity to listen to the council of learned peers. He was capable of protecting his subjects.

According to the copper plates of Ganga ruler Madhava II, the Pallava rulers Simhavarman and Skandavarman had supported two Ganga rulers Harivarman and Madhava II to assume the Ganga throne. These two Pallava rulers can be identified with Simhavarman III the donor of Vesandam plate and Skandavarman who is mentioned in Udayendram plate. The scholars suggest the date of Simhavarman III between AD 436 and 460 and that of Skandavarman between AD 460 and AD 475.<sup>28</sup>

Nandivarman I the donor of Udayendram plates is introduced by the plates as the son of Skandavarman. Just like his predecessors Nandivarman was god fearing and considered the well being and the happiness of his subjects. This was taken to be equal to conducting *yaga*. He was devoted to the feet of Bappattaraka and the most renowned among the bhagavatas. He is described as Dharmamaharaja by the copper plates.

Scholars are of opinion that Nandivarman's rule would have commenced a few years earlier to AD 500.<sup>29</sup> Kanchivayal a grama in the Adayaru rashtra along with four forest lands were endowed by the king to one Kulasarman. Udayendram plates say that this endowment was made by him for the sake of longevity of life, strength, victory and affluence.

The Pallankoil copper plates issued during the 6th regnal year of Simhavarman IV take the pride of being the first record in which the royal order was issued in Tamil. The order was issued to the *nattar* of *Perunagar* of Venkunrakottam. Accordingly Simhavarman IV had endowed the *grama Amancherkkai* in this place to a Jain scholar Vajranandi as *Pallichandam*. Vajranandi is also granted  $16\frac{1}{2}$  *pattis* of land at Damar. T.N. Subramanian opines that Simhavarman's rule commenced earlier to AD 577. R. Kalaikkovan suggests that he ruled upto AD 557<sup>30</sup> and his analysis is based on the study of one of the herostone inscriptions of Chengam.

The Pallava emblem *Rishaba* had been engraved on the front face of the seal of the ring that binds the copper plates. The seal has auspicious articles engraved on it and the Grantha letters are found at the rim or edge. Pallankoil plate identifies Simhavarman as the father of Simhavishnu. The Velurpalayam plates of Nandivarman III describes Simhavarman as a person who possessed undaunted spirit and energy to conduct war against the enemies. Simhavarman IV is accommodated as the next ruler of Nandivarman I in the Pallava genealogy since it goes by reason which is based on the analisation of available records.

Simhavishnu is the father of illustrious Mahendravarman whose rule brought forth a turning point in the art history. Simhavishnu who occupied the Pallava throne approximately from AD 557 to AD 590 had possessed qualities like honesty, sacrifice, humility and purity. He was good at warfare and was in possession of all qualities that are suitable for a hero of battlefields. According to the Pallankoil copper plate Simhavishnu who adorned the throne of the Pallavas was comparable only to Arjuna in the art of warfare especially the use of bow and arrow.

With a poetic expression the inscription describes that after the conquest of the Chola country Kaviri the daughter of Kavera was worn like garland by Simhavishnu. The fertile paddy fields and sugar cane plantations of Kaviri delta was colourful dress worn by the king. Areca nuts gardens and the banana groves became the *Odyana* (ornament worn in the waist) of the king. This indicates the fertility of the Chola country and the conquest of this land was happy occasion for Simhavishnu. More or less a similar expression about the conquest of Chola country by Simhavishnu is found in the Velurpalayam plates of Nandivarman III. According to this record Simhavishnu was devoted to Vishnu.

Kasakudi plates of Nandivarman II give a vivid picture about the conquest of Simhavishnu. Avanisimha (Simhavishnu) had won over the Malavas, the Kalabhras, the Cholas, the Pandyas and the Keralas. According to Kasakudi plates Simhavishnu went on a successful expedition against Ceylon.

Simhavishnu is depicted in Mattavilasaprahasanam the work authored by his son Mahendravarman as the mountain that bears the world that was Pallava kula. He had won over so many countries. He was like Indira in heroism, Kubera in wealth and a lion among kings.<sup>31</sup>

Avanisundari Katha Sara says that Simhavishnu who was born in the Pallava kula through his exploits and chivalrous nature had defeated the enemy kings and had confiscated all their movable and immovable wealth.<sup>32</sup>

The renowned Sanskrit poet Bharavi had adorned the court of Simhavishnu. This poet was on a friendly term with the eastern Chalukyan ruler Vishnuvardhana and the Ganga ruler Dhurvinita. Avanisundari Katha Sara authored by Dandin narrates in detail the compelling situation under which Bharavi left these rulers and reached the Pallava court.

Simhavishnu Chaturvedimangalam which finds a reference in inscriptions is identified as Kanjanur and Manali which are now in the northern side of the Chennai. This serves as evidence to know about the extent of Pallava rule. A very elegant sculpture of this king is found in the Parameswara Mahavaraha Vishnugriham at Mamallapuram with his name Simhavishnu pottadhirayan inscribed on it.<sup>33</sup> The king is seated on a Simhasana and on the either side are his queens in the standing posture.

Mahendravarman I who is the personification of fine arts in their various forms adorned the Pallava throne and added luster to it in AD 590. He was the illustrious son of the illustrious father who was Simhavishnu. Udayendram plates describe that Mahendra's exploits were equal to that of Mahendran. Unnaguruvapalayam plates record<sup>34</sup> that he was in possession of a rajya that was won over through his courage and heroism. He was the saviour of this earth. Kasakudi plates compares him with Indira and gives a very important historical information. It is said that Mahendra had successfully fought the war and exterminated his enemies in the battle of Pullur. This incident has reference to Mahendra's war against Pulakesin II the Chalukyan ruler of Vatapi.

The creative mind and the fertile imaginative spirit of Mahendravarman brought forth a turning point in the field of architecture. He broke the tradition and for the first time stone became the material that was used for building temples. Mahendravarman is the author of so many cave temples that were excavated in different regions of Tamil Nadu. The foundation inscription of the cave temple at Mandagappattu<sup>35</sup> is the authentic record which states that Mahendravarman had excavated the cave without using timber, brick, mortar and metal as the abode of Brahma, Eswara and Vishnu. The cave temples excavated by Mahendra are found at Dalavanur, Pallavaram, Mamandur, Siyamangalam, Mahendravadi and Tiruchirappalli. A feudatory under Mahendravarman had excavated the cave at Vallam. Mahendravarman is known through his popular titles like *Gunabhara*, *Chitrakarappuli*, *Chaityakari*, *Vichitrachitta*, *Lalithankara*, *Avanibhajana*, *Satrumalla* and *Lakshita*. Some of his inscriptions are found in his own cave temples.

Mahendravarman had written a commentary for Dakshinachitra a work on painting. He is the author of the two satirical work Bhagavatajjugam and Mattavilasaprahasanam. He is the author of the musical note called Sangirnajathi.<sup>36</sup> His Mamandur inscription exposes him as the author of some work on music.<sup>37</sup>

During the period of Mahendravarman Kanchi was invaded by the Chalukya ruler Pulakesin II. Though in this Pallava - Chalukyan conflict Pulakesin was able to overrun the Pallavas in the beginning the final victory was achieved by the Pallavas at Pullalur. M. Rajamanikkanar is of opinion that Gangas also participated in this struggle for power.<sup>38</sup>

Mahendravarman who secured the Pallava crown towards the end of the 6th century had become the most favoured child of history through his unsurpassing intelligence, creative and artistic mind and also because of the temples that were excavated by him which are permanent and enduring.

The Pallava dynasty which came into existence in the middle of the 3rd century AD continued till AD 600, the period taken for the study and there after further extended to AD 900. This is clearly known through the copper plates and the inscriptions of the Pallavas themselves. Though Kancheepuram was lost, the Pallava rule shifted to Andhrapada until they regained Kanchi. After that their rule was well established and this had been proved by scholars with authentic evidences. Towards the end the period taken for study Mahendravarman I was the ruler of Kanchi and his rule comprised a large area except the southern part of Tamil Nadu. Mahendravarman's rule had been fixed between AD 590 and AD 630.<sup>39</sup> Through the hero stones of Chengam it is evident that his father Simhavishnu ruled for 30 years and hence Simhavishnu might have ruled from AD 557 to AD 590.

It has been presumed by the scholars with the support of the inscriptions that Ganga rulers Harivarman and Madhava II were able to occupy the Ganga throne with the aid of Pallava kings Simhavarman and Skandavarman respectively.<sup>40</sup> According to the Pallava genealogy these rulers can be identified as Simhavarman III and Skandavarman VI. The Ganga copper plates serve as corroboratory evidence to fix the date for these rulers between AD 436 and AD 500. So it is a suitable surmise here that Nandivarman I and Simhavarman IV who were occupying the Pallava

throne, between the period of Sivaskandavarman VI and Simhavishnu had ruled between AD 500 and AD 557.

The Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta while mentioning about his exploits in the south mentions that the rulers in the region of Krishna and Godavari combined together and confronted him and Samudragupta had defeated them. During this expedition of Samudragupta, Vishnugopan of Kanchi was also won over by him. In the Pallava genealogy there are two rulers with the name of Vishnugopavarman. Among these two Vishnugopan I finds a place in seven copper plates of Pallavas. Six of these copper plates mention him as *Yuvamaharaja* and these copper plates were issued by his son Simhavarman II. Simhavarman II had issued them from Andhrapada. *Yuvamaharaja* Vishnugopan finds his place between Skandavarman III and Simhavarman II and hence he is the son of the former and the father of the latter. Vishnugopan occupied the position of *Yuvamaharaja* throughout his life and he would not have been the ruler of Kanchi on the occasion of Samudragupta's invasion.

The Sura copper plate was issued by Vishnugopan II who was the son of Simhavarman II, grandson of Vishnugopan I and great grandson of Skandavarman III. The copper plates refer to him as Maharaja Srivijaya Vishnugopa. He should have been the ruler who was ruling Kanchi at the time of the invasion of Samudragupta. Since the date of Samudragupta's invasion of south was AD 350 it can be taken as the period of Vishnugopan II. Taking this fact into consideration the period between Vishnugopan II who ruled Kanchi around AD 350 and Simhavarman III who had ruled around AD 436. Six Pallava kings ruled from Kanchi. Among these six rulers Skandavarman IV who is identified as Skandasishya had captured the

*Ghatika* of Kanchi from Sathyasena. This information is recorded in the Velurpalayam plate. In this context it can be noted here that the invasion of Vakataka ruler Prithvisena took place around AD 360. Since Skandasishya who is identified as Skandavarman IV had captured the *Ghatika* from Vakatakas, the date of Vakataka invasion of south that is AD 360 had been taken into consideration by the scholars to fix the period of Skandavarman IV between AD 350 and AD 360.<sup>41</sup>

Pallava dynasty's independent existence begins with Simhavarman of Manchikallu inscription and based on the script of the inscription scholars fix the date of the inscription as the later half of the 3rd century.<sup>42</sup> On analysing the script certain other scholars bring it down to the end of 3rd century also. If this view is taken into consideration, between Simhavarman I and Vishnugopan II six Pallava rulers had occupied the Pallava throne from AD 250 to AD 350.

The genealogy fixed by scholars who had written on Pallava history is not based on the copper plates issued by the Pallavas. C. Minakshi had mentioned three Vishnugopas in the list of genealogy given by her.<sup>43</sup> But copper plates refer to only two rulers in the name of Vishnugopa Viravarman and Skandavarman of Vesandam plates and Viravarman and Skandavarman of Ongodu plates I are identified as the same rulers by C. Minakshi. According to this genealogy Skandavarman who is mentioned in the copper plates should be the father of Simhavarman of Udayendram plates and *Yuvamaharaja* Vishnugopan who is identified as the father of Simhavarman II, the donor of six grants like Urvappalli. There is no indication in the available copper plates that Vishnugopan was a brother of Simhavarman. Simhavarman who is identified by C. Minakshi as one of the

two sons of Skandavarman of Vesandam and Ongodu I records was actually the grandfather of Nandivarman I who issued Udayendram plates from Kancheepuram. Yuvamaharaja Vishnugopan and following him Simhavarman and Vishnugopan have ruled from Andhrapada. Without considering Nandivarman I the donor of Udayendram plates who ruled from Kanchi Simhavishnu's father Simhavarman had been identified as the son of Vishnugopa who ruled from Andhrapada in the genealogy presented by C. Minakshi. Similarly Buddavarman and Skandavarman are identified by C. Minakshi as the sons of Kumaravishnu of Velurpalayam plate who had captured Kancheepuram. This cannot be agreed since Buddhavarman ruled from Kancheepuram whereas Skandavarman and his successors in the genealogical list had ruled from Andhrapada.

According to M. Rajamanikkanar Simhavarman, Yuvamaharaja Vishnugopan and Kumaravishnu were the sons of Skandavarman.<sup>44</sup> Since he had not included Simhavarman I of Manchikkallu inscription in his genealogical list Skandavarman's son Simhavarman is considered as Simhavarman I by M. Rajamanikkanar. Eight Pallava copper plates are able to identify seven kings starting from Kumaravishnu I to Vishnugopan II in the Pallava genealogy continuously without a break. These copper plates do not mention that Skandavarman had three sons. Among the three generations of kings presented in this genealogy Vishnugopan and his successors ruled from Andhrapada. The kings who followed Kumaravishnu (Vesandam plates) and those who followed Simhavarman (Udayendram plates) had issued the grants from Kanchi. Hence there is no possibility of two different generations of kings ruling from the same capital and exercising sovereignty by the way of issuing grants. On these grounds M. Rajamanikkanar's list is also formed on wrong calculations.

The genealogy that is given by R. Gopalan deviates to a very large extent from the guidance given by the copper plates.<sup>45</sup> In his genealogy it is found that Kumaravishnu III (AD 560 - AD 580) and Simhavishnu (AD 557 - 590) were ruling as two different branches of the dynasty. This in no way can fit into the Pallava genealogy.

The 15 copper plates of the Pallavas, other copper plates and the inscriptions are available to present more or less the exact genealogy of the Pallavas. The scholars have not taken up their guidance and there was a general thought that between AD 250 and AD 610, so many rulers, nearly twenty three of them, would not have ruled. Based on this assumption the scholars never accepted the fact Pallavas ruled as a single dynasty. So many collateral lines of the dynasty were created and this has thrown the entire dynastic history of the Pallavas into confusion. So naturally the history of a dynasty which ruled a large area in Tamil Nadu between AD 300 and AD 610 was not genuinely brought to light due to the lack of a scientific approach to the source materials which had ultimately lead to faulty conclusions.

### **Kalabhras**

The scholars have given different views about the Kalabhras who occupied the southern and eastern regions of Tamil Nadu between AD 250 and AD 550. Kalabhras were identified with Gangas, Kalvakula, descendants of Pulli of Venkatam and Vadugar.<sup>46</sup> K.P. Aravanian opines that Kalabhras were Tamils.<sup>47</sup> M. Arunachalam who had made an elaborate study of the Kalabhras had not only refuted these views of the scholars but also had identified the Kalabhras and the region from where they came down to Tamil Nadu on the basis of related sources.<sup>48</sup>

Through the Kannada tradition it is known that Sravanabelgola in Belur which is 60 miles away from the north of Belur rose into prominence as an important Jain centre from AD 300. One among the small hills found in this region is mentioned as Kalabappu in the inscriptions of this area. M. Arunachalam opines that Kalabhras were an ancient tribal people who had settled in this region. M. Arunachalam's view is based on the explanations and interpretations presented by R. Narasimhachariar in the second volume of the Kannada inscription that had been reanalysed and published. The information found in the Halmidi inscription which was discovered and published by H.M. Krishna, the Director of Archaeological Department of Mysore in 1936 is supportive to the aforesaid view about the Kalabhras.<sup>49</sup> This slab inscription at Halmidi which is in close proximity with Sravanabelgola mentions that Kakustha Battara was the enemy of the Kalabhras. The scholars who associated the words Kalabappu and Kalabhara with the word Kalabhra mentioned in Velvikkudi grant logically concluded that Kalabharas came to be called as Kalabhras in Tamil. This view can be accepted. Since they were continuously disturbed in this region they migrated to south and occupied the southern and eastern regions of Tamil Nadu. Kalabhras had chastised the Pandyas and the Cholas and had held sway in the southern central and eastern regions of Tamil Nadu. The Pallavas who were well established in Thondaimandalam had been defeated by the Kalabhras and the Pallavas had lost Kancheepuram after Buddiyankura. This resulted in Pallavas retreating to the border area between Tamil Nadu and Andhra and had ruled from Andhrapada.

The occupation of Madurai by Kalabhras was complete and they destroyed the culture there. This is known through Parantaka Nedunchadaiyan's Velvikkudi grant,<sup>50</sup> Kalladam of Kalladanar<sup>51</sup> and Sekkilar's Periapuranam.<sup>52</sup>

Velvikkudi which is the earliest of the copper plates of the Pandyas was issued by Maranchadaiyan alias Jatila Parantaka Nedunchadaiyan, the seventh king of the Pandyas of Kadungon line who defeated the Kalabhras and restored the Pandyas rule in Madurai towards the end of sixth century. Palyagasarai Mudukudumipperuvaludi the Sangam Pandya king conducted a big *yaga* and Korkaikilan Narkorran the bhrahmin who performed the *yaga* was granted the village which was named after the event as Velvikkudi. The descendants of Narkorran were enjoying this property continuously. When Pandya country came under the occupation of the Kalabhras this grant was confiscated by them since their attitude was one of intolerance. The Pandya power in Madurai was restored by Kadungon after defeating the Kalabhras. Narsingan a descendent of Korkaikilan Narkorran was in streets lamenting over the loss of the ancestral property. Neduchadaiyan who was then the ruler had restored the grant based on the authenticity of the evidences that were produced by Narsingan. These events are detailed in the Velvikkudi grant.

The occupation of Pandya country by the Kalabhras and later on the restoration of Pandya rule after defeating the Kalabhras by Kadungon had been explained in the Tamil portion of the grant as "அளவரிய ஆதி ராஜரை அகல நீக்கி அகலிடத்தைக் களப்ரனென்னும் கலி அரசனை கைக் கொண்டதனை இருக்கியிபின். படுகடல் முளைத்த பரிதி போல பாண்டியாதி ராஜன் வெளிப்பட்டு விடுகதிர் அவிராளி விலக வீற்றிருந்து. வேலை குழந்தவியலித்துக் கோவும் குறும்பும் பாவுடன் முடுக்கிச் செங்கோலோச்சி. வெண்குடை நிழற்றங் கொளி நிறைந்த மங்கையைப் பிற்பால் உரிமை திறலிதின நீக்கித் தன்பால் உரிமை நன்கனம் அமைந்த மானம் பேர்த்ததானை வேந்தன் நெடுங்கா மன்னர் ஒளிநகர் அழித்த கடுங்கோன் என்னும் கதிர் வேல் தென்னன்".

From the above said statement it is clear that Pandyas suffered a setback in the hands of the Kalabhras and the Kalabhra hegemony had extended to the entire region of Madurai. The Pandyas who had lost their rule in Madurai had faded into oblivion from the pages of history like the sun that had fallen into the large sea. Kalabhra rule prolonged for sometimes in Madurai. Just like the sun that rises from the sea Kadungon had appeared and exterminated the Kalabhras from the Pandya country and restored the Pandyan rule at Madurai. This historical fact is represented by the Tamil portion of the Velvikkudi copper plates.

Kalladan literature says,

"படை நான்கு உடன்று பஞ்சவன் துறந்து  
மதுரை வல்விய கருநாடர் வேந்தன்  
அருகர் சார்ந்து நின்று அரங்பணி அடைப்ப"

According to the above lines a Kalabhra king invaded the Pandya country with the four wings of the army and defeated them and captured Madurai. The Kalabhra who was a Jain adopted so many violent methods to force his religion on the people and brought to an end the dharma practiced by Saivites as their prime duty. This event finds a lengthy narration in *Periapuram* as

"காளக்கடி குழ் வடுகக் கருநாடர் காவல்  
மானப்படை மன்னன் வலிந்து நிலம் கொள்வானாய்  
யானைக் குதிரைக் கருவிப்படை வீரர் திரண்ட  
சேனைக் கடலும் கொடு தென்திசை நோக்கி வந்தான்  
வந்துற்ற பெரும்படை மன்புதையப் பரப்பிச்  
சந்தப் பொதியில் தமிழ் நாடுடை மன்னன் வீரம்  
சிந்தச் செருவென்று தன்னாணை செலுத்தும் ஆற்றால்  
கந்தப் பொழில் குழ் மதுராபுரி காவல் கொண்டான்  
வல்லாண்மையின் வன்தமிழ்நாடு வளம்படுத்து  
நில்லா நிலை ஒன்றிய இன்மையின் நீண்ட மேரு  
வில்லான் அடிமைத் திறம் மேவிய திருநீற்றின் சார்பு  
செல்லாது அருகர்தந் திறத்தினில் சிந்தை தாழ்ந்தான்"

The above verses which are quoted from the Murthy Nayanan puranam also mention about the fall of the Pandyan rule due to the Kalabhra invasion. Kalabhras through the strength of their arms had subdued the people under their tyrannical rule. Since they were Jains they had degraded the Saiva cult and Savites suffered a lot of disgrace under Kalabhra rule.

### **Pulankurichchi Inscription**

Though there are solid evidences to prove Kalabhra occupation of Madurai and their ultimate extermination from Madurai evidences are lacking to know about their genealogy and also the nature of rule. A lengthy inscription found on the slope of a hill at Pulankurichchi in Tirupattur had been deciphered, and interpreted by Y. Subbharayalu. Y. Subbharayalu assigns this inscription to 5th century AD<sup>53</sup> which is based on the nature of the script adopted. He raises a doubt regarding the rulers mentioned in the inscription as to whether they are Pandyas or Kalabhras. Y. Subbharayalu suggests that if the rulers are considered as Kalabhras then they should have adopted the Pandya names and titles after the conquest of Pandya country. This view can be logically taken into consideration. Since the Pulankurichchi inscription mentions about Devakulam Devanar Kottam it can be presumed that the Kalabhras who were bigots in the religious policy in the beginning would have become tolerant in due course. According to the particular line found in the inscription, '*pandi nattung kongu nattum mavaru karankilamayum*' (பாண்டி நாட்டுங் கொங்கு நாட்டும் மவருகாராண் கிழமையும்) indicates that Kongu country was also under their rule. This inscription enables to know about the nature of administration in those days in Tamil Nadu.

### **Language of the Kalabhras**

According to M. Arunachalam and A. Krishnaswamy Prakrit is considered as the language of the Kalabhras who occupied the Pandya country.<sup>54</sup> A branch among them were well versed in Pali language also. M. Arunachalam was of opinion that Kannada words were also used by the Kalabhras in their spoken language and he had given this idea based on literary sources. Some of the early inscriptions that were discovered from the southern region of Tamil Nadu have Prakrit words. This denotes the influence of Prakrit in the region.

The Kalabhras followed the Jain religion. During the Kalabhra rule Vajranandi Kuravar, a Jain scholar organised a Dravida Sangam at Madurai. During the Kalabhra rule Jainism was popular in Tamil Nadu and this fact is attested by Kalladam and Murthy Nayanar puranam. Thamili inscriptions that were discovered in Madurai and the places in its periphery speak about the Jaina beds that were made for Jain scholars. The word *Upachagar* found in some of these inscriptions (Tiruvadavur, Kongarpulangulam) means the persons who were practicing the principles laid down in the religious<sup>55</sup> scriptures while leading a family life. The name Chendan found in the Mettuppatti inscription<sup>56</sup> is supportive to associate the Kalabhras with the kings mentioned in the Pulankurichchi inscription.

### **The Kalabhras in the Chola Country**

The scholars view that a branch of the Kalabhras who migrated from Kalabappu and invaded Tamil Nadu had occupied the Chola country. But they were not aggressive like the Kalabhras who occupied the Pandya

country. Buddha Dutta the Buddhist monk who wrote Vinayavirichchayam in Pali language mentions in this work that Achchyuta Vikkanta a Kalabhra king ruled Puhar and the surrounding regions of the Chola country.<sup>57</sup> Buddha who had resided in the Buddhist monasteries at Kaviripumpattinam, Uraiyyur, Bhudamangalam and Kancheepuram was the author of another work in Pali, Abhidhammadvatara. This work was written by him while residing in the Buddhist monastery of Kanhadasa at Puhar.<sup>58</sup>

Buddha Dutta wrote Vinayavinichchaya while staying in the Buddhist monastery at Bhudamangalam near Kumbakonam which was built by Venudasa. Buddha Datta himself says that he wrote this work during the reign of Achchyuta Vikkanta, the Kalabhra ruler. A. Krishnaswamy opines that Buddha Datta was a contemporary of Sirukuttan (AD 409 - 430) the ruler of Ceylon.<sup>59</sup>

Abhidammaratara details about the prosperity of Puhar, the development of trade and the cultural life of the people. Bhudamangalam is described as the heart land of the Chola country. Since Buddha Datta himself had mentioned that Abhidhammadvatara was written by him during the reign of Achchyuta Vikkanta the references found in the work can be taken for consideration as the direct force. Achchyuta Vikkanta was a Buddhist and a just monarch. A. Krishnaswamy had mentioned in the article that Buddhakosa a contemporary of Buddha Datta had written in his work about a Kalabhra king who ruled Chola country.<sup>60</sup>

M. Arunachalam identifies the king Achchyutako mentioned in the verses Yapparungala Urai and Yapparungala Vrithi as Achchyuta Vikkanta.<sup>61</sup> One of the verses says that Achchyuta Vikkanta though a

Buddhist was tolerant towards the other religious sects and also supported the Brahmins.

பொருக்கை வளாகம் ஒருக்கை நிழற்றி  
இருபிறப்பாளர்க்கு ஈந்து மனமிழற்று  
நந்தி மாமலை சிலம்ப  
நந்தி நிற்பரவுதல் நாவலர்களிடே

The meaning of the above verse goes with the fact that most of the places sung in praise of by Appar and Sambandar are situated in the Chola country. The places sung in praise of by the two Saivite saints Appar and Sundarar are less in number in Pandya country and are innumerable in Chola country and this difference can justify the attitude of the Kalabhras towards co-religionists in their region.

The verse in Yapparungala vrithi urai describes the character and personality of Achchyuta as, "புயல் உறம் தடக்கைப் போர் வேல் அச்சுதன் ஒன்று உடல் உலகம் முழுவதும் ஒன்று திகிரி உருட்டுவோன்" and "தொடுகழற் கொடும்பூண் பசும் பொழில் மார்பன்"<sup>62</sup> The same verse mentions that the three monarchs the Cheras, the Cholas and the Pandyas were enslaved by the king. This only indicates that Achchyuta's rule extended over a very large area in Tamil Nadu. Yapparungala Karigai the work written by Gunasekara brings out an imaginary description that in the port city of Korkai which was protected by Achchyuta women were engaged in making *aram* that is chain with the pearls and these shining pearls were no match for the shining white teeth of those women.<sup>63</sup> Since the Buddha Datta had mentioned that a part of the Pandya country was also coming under the rule of Achchyuta the above description suits the occasion.<sup>64</sup>

## Kalabhras in Thondai Nadu

From the reign of Simhavarman I who defeated Ikshavahus and occupied their territory and extended further towards south to the reign of Buddhiyankura Kancheepuram was under the Pallavas. This is evident from the Mayidavolu, Hirahadahalli and Gunapadeyam copper plates of the Pallavas. After Buddhiyankura Thondainadu was lost by the Pallavas for nearly a period of hundred years which is known through the copper plates issued by them. The Pallavas were able to recapture Kanchi and reestablish their rule either towards the end of the rule of Simhavarman III or the beginning of the rule of his son Vishnugopan II. In this intermediary period probably the Pallava country would have come under the Kalabhras. The Kalabhras were repulsed and the Pallava rule was restored by in Kanchi either by Simhavarman II or by his son Vishnugopan II.

Inspite of being overthrown by the Pallavas the Kalabhras did not totally disappear from the Pallava country. They were constantly disturbing the Pallavas. From the Velurpalayam plates it is understood that Cholas also equally constituted a menace for the Pallavas. Kasakudi plates give the whole credit of subduing the Cholas as well as the Kalabhras to Simhavishnu.<sup>65</sup> It is known through Pallava copper plates that Kalabhras of Thondainadu existed under the Pallavas paying tribute till the period of Nandivarman II.

From the available sources it can be surmised that the Kalabhra rule did not prolong at Thondainadu as it had happened in the other regions of Tamilagam and only for a period of hundred years the Kalabhras had

occupied the northern part of Tamil Nadu. Kalabhras who had defeated the Pallavas of Prakrit charters were repulsed either by Vishnugopan II who faced Samudragupta's invasion or his father Simhavarman II resulting in the restoration of the Pallava rule.

It is appropriate to consider here that the pilgrimage centres sung by Appar and Sambandar are only one sixth in Thondainadu when compared with that of the Chola country. This would be double the number when compared with the Pandya country. This would give an idea about the extent to which each of these regions were affected by the Kalabhra invasion.

Though both Buddhism and Jainism flourished well in Kancheepuram, Jain relics alone are found in Kancheepuram and Tiruvannamalai and the Jain temple found in these regions support the conclusion that just like the Kalabhras of Pandya country the Kalabhras who invaded Thondainadu were also Jains.

Just like Jainism was popular in Madurai till the time of Nirlasir Nedumaran in Pallava country this religion was flourishing upto the period of Mahendravarman I. It can be noted here Mahendravarman I himself was a Jain in the formative years and later became a Saivite. On examining various evidences it is understood that northern part of Tamil Nadu was also occupied by Kalabhras for a short period.

## The Cholas

There are evidences through which it can be proved that the Chola country proper and certain regions of Thondaimandalam were ruled by the Cholas atleast for a short period between AD 300 and 600. The Chola monarch Kochenganan had ruled Chola country in this intervening period and R. Kalikkovan's research articles about this king throw very rich and so far unexplored historical facts about this monarch.<sup>66</sup> Kochenganan had been celebrated by the three Saivites saints Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar and also Tirumangai Alwar in their compositions. These saints had exposed Kochenganan's courage and exploits and also about the temples built by him.

Kochenganan had fought a war against the kings who opposed him at Venni and had defeated them

"வெங்கண்மா களிறுந்தி வெண்ணடி யேற்ற  
விறல் மன்னர் திறலழிய வெம்மாவுப்தத்  
சௌங்கணான் கோக்ஸோழன்  
கவ்வை மா களிறுந்தி வெண்ணி யேற்ற  
கழல் மன்னர் மணிமுடிமேல் காகமேற"

Thus his exploits against the rulers and the final victory at Venni is described in two *pasurams* of Tirumangai as given above.<sup>67</sup>

"மின்னாடு வேலேந்து விளந்தை வேளை  
விண்ணேறத் தனி வேலுய்த் துலக மாண்ட  
தென்னாடன் தட கொங்கன்"

From the above said verse of Tirumangai Alwar it is understood that Vilandai velir, a Velir chieftain was a foe of Kochenganan and the king died in the battlefield as Kochenganan's vel pierced him.<sup>68</sup> Tirumangai Alwar praises him with the titles like *Deivaral valam konda Cholan*, *Then Tamilan*, *Vadapulakkon Cholan*, *Ulagamanda Thennadan*, *Kudakkon Cholan* and *Theralan Kochcholan*. The kings who fought with this monarch were also celebrated as *Kazhal mannar*, *Viral mannar* and *Padaimannar*. From all these references it can be understood that Kochenganan was a hero in the battlefields. Since Sambandar mentions Kochenganan as '*Tiraiyudai nirai chelvan*'<sup>69</sup> in one of the *pathigam* it is evident that he had won many kings in wars and had received tributes from them.

*'Kalavazhi Narppadu'* an eulogy on Kochenganan sung by Poygayar details about the war that took place between the Chola king and a Chera king.

"அரசர் பிணங்கான்று நெய்தோர் மரசொலி  
முத்துடைக் கோட்ட களிநீர்ப்ப - எத்திசையும்  
பெளவும் புணரம்பி போன்ற புனல் நாடன்  
தெல்வரை அட்ட களத்து"

N.M. Venkatasamy Nattar who had written a commentary for *Kalavazhi Narpadu* had explained the above said verse.<sup>70</sup> In the battlefield where Kochenganan had fought the enemies, the blood that was flowing from the dead bodies of the enemy camp was flooding the place like water on which the elephants with the tusks decorated with pearls were floating with the drums. This sort of the battle scene is compared with the waves of the sea that carries large wooden ships. From the line "*Vanjiko atta kalathy*" found in one of the forty verses in *Kalavazhi Narpadu* it is evident that the Chera king who fought with Kochenganan had lost his life in the battlefield.<sup>71</sup>

The Velurpalayam copper plate of Nandi III mentions Buddhavarman II in the Pallava genealogy.<sup>72</sup> Since the copper plates say that Buddhavarman was fire (*Vadavagni*) to the ocean like army of the Cholas it can be assumed that a long and protracted war had taken place between the Cholas and the Pallavas. In this war first the Cholas and then the Pallavas would have won. There is a probability that Kochenganan conducted the war. The fact is attested by the existence of a place called Chenganmalesvaram in the name of Kochenganan in proximity to Tiruvidandai in Kancheepuram in Thondainadu.

Kochenganan had carved a niche for himself in the field of architecture which is celebrated by Tirumangai Alwar and three great Nayanmars.

"இருக்கிலங்கு திருமொழிவா யென்டோளீசுங்கு  
எழில் மாட மெழுபது செய் துலகமாண்ட  
திருக்குலத்து வனச்சோழன் சேர்ந்த கோயில்  
திருநிறையூர் மணிமாடம் சேர்பின்களே"

In the above verse Tirumangaiyar explicitly says that Kochenganan had built seventy temples in the style of Madakkoil.<sup>73</sup>

"வம்பியல் சோலை குழ் வைகல் மேற்றிசைச்  
செம்பியன் கோச்செகணான் செய் கோயிலே  
அரிசிலம் பொருடுனல் சும்பர் மாநகர்க்  
குரிசில் செங்கணணவன் கோயில் சேர்வரே"

In the above verse Sambandar indicates that the temples in the style of Madakkoil were constructed at Vaigal and Ambar by Kochenganan.<sup>74</sup>

"கோடுயர் வெங்களிற்றுத் திகழ் கோச்செங்கணான் செப்கோயில் நாடிய நன்னிலத்துப் பெருங்கோயில்"

The aforesaid verse of Sundarar clearly states that Kochenganan was the author of the *Perumkoil (Madakkoil)* at Nannilam.<sup>75</sup>

Number of temples in the style of Madakkoil as seen in Tirukkudavasal, Tiruanaikka, Tirunaraiyur were built by Kochenganan are seen upto Nagappattinam. R. Kalaikkovan opines that Kochenganan's hegemony as the monarch of the Cholas had extended upto this region.<sup>76</sup>

The temperate spirit maintained by Kochenganan with the co-religionists is established by R. Kalaikkovan through relevant sources. It can be particularly noted here that the literary works *Muvarula* and *Kalingattupparani* while narrating the genealogy of the Cholas before Vijayalaya had mentioned Kochenganan.<sup>77</sup> Anbil copper plates of Sundara Chola identify *Nalladikon* as the son of Kochenganan.<sup>78</sup>

An inscription belonging to the 23rd regnal year of Rajakesarivarman which was discovered at Puduppakkam in Kancheepuram district mentions that the *Sabha* of Nalladimangalam in Melpazhugur (மேல்பழகுர்) Nadu in *Manavi Kottam* had endowed lands to *Pidari* temple as *iraiyili* (tax free). Certain scholars are of opinion that the village Nallidimangalam referred to in the inscription should have been named after Nallidikon.<sup>79</sup>

Manimekhalai refers to one Elankilli the younger brother of Thodukalarkilli (தொடுகழற்கள்ளி) who had built a Buddha *Vihara* at Kanchi.<sup>80</sup> It can be assumed that Kancheepuram was under Cholas for sometime.

From Sekkilar's Periapuranam it is understood that one Pugal Cholan was ruling from Karur. Sekkilar narrates about the conflict between Pugal Chola and Adigaiman of Thagadur in which the Chola was able to win. According to the view of certain scholars Pugal Chola should have ruled between AD 400 and AD 500.<sup>81</sup> An inscription discovered recently by Pulavar Raju in Vellianai at Karur - Dindigul road supports the view that Chola rule was existing in Karur.<sup>82</sup> The inscription which was found on the bank of a tank refers to one Choliyavaraiyan as the excavator of the tank. According to Pulavar Raju the inscription belongs to AD 4th century and Choliyavaraiyan might have been the Chola ruler who had ruled this region. Karur is one of the five places over which the Cholas had established their power. This indicates that Cholas were ruling Karur between AD 400 and AD 500.

Through the reference found in Manimekhalai it can be suggested that Puhar was under the Cholas for sometimes within the period taken for study (AD 300 - AD 600). This would have happened either before or after the event of Kalabhra invasion. Mavankilli had ruled Chola country with the sense of justice and contributed for the welfare of the subjects. According to the epic Manimekhalai the ruler as transformed the prisons into charity homes on considering the advice of Manimekhalai.<sup>83</sup> There was a peaceful coexistence among the different religious groups during the rule of this king and hence it can be assumed that Mavankilli's reign at Puhar would have commenced after the Kalabhra invasion.

The Pallankoil copper plate issued by Simhavarman IV mentions about the conflict between the Cholas and the Pallavas in which Pallavas were able to defeat the Cholas and occupy their fertile land. From this it is known that Cholas were quite powerful to the extent of waging war with the Pallavas. It can be noted here that the inscription of Mahendran I at Lalithankurappallanesvaragriham at Tiruchirappalli mentions this area as Chola country.<sup>84</sup>

Since Tiruchirappalli was captured by the Pallavas after their victory against the Cholas it can be assumed that Cholas made Palayarai as their headquarters. It would be appropriate here to mention that a Chola king supported when he took his individual effort to save the temple at Araivadatali from the assaults of Jains.<sup>85</sup> After the period of Simhavarman IV the Cholas were existing as the feudatories of the Pallavas at Palaiyarai till the advent of Vijayalaya who started the imperial Chola line.

### **Pandyas**

Kalabhras were expelled and the Pandya rule was restored at Madurai by Kadungon. According to the calculations of N. Sethuraman, Kadungon's rule started around AD 550.<sup>86</sup> After him the reign of Maravarman Avanichoolamani and of Chendan were upto AD 624. These three rulers are mentioned in succession by the Velvikkudi grant.

Velvikkudi copper plates introduces Kadungon as the king who had done away with all the injustices and had compared him with the sun which illuminates the earth with its bright rays and removed the scales of darkness from the earth. The king had destroyed all his enemies and he had ruled with a sense of justice seated under the shade of his umbrella.

Maravarman Avanichoolamani the successor of Kadungon possessed an ocean like army which was ready to serve in times of need. The king who was owning enormous wealth was very proficient in war.

Chendan the son of Avanichoolamani had the title of *Chenkor Chendan*. He inscribed his victory on the rock. In the 17th regnal year of this king Chevurkkilar Sattan Yeran the ruler of Pandiamangalavati had taken the orders of Chendan and had excavated a cave temple at Malayadikkurichchi.<sup>87</sup> This temple is the earliest cave excavated by the Pandyas of the I empire Maravarman. Arikesai who is introduced as Ninrasir Nedumaran by Tiruttondarpuranam is the son of Chendan.

According to the astronomical calculations of N. Sethuraman, Pandyan rule which was restored by Kadungon at AD 550 had continued upto AD 959.<sup>88</sup>

### **Banas**

Banas who are otherwise known as *Vanakkovaraiyar* were the minor chieftains who occupied a worthy place in the annals of south Indian history more or less from 4th century AD to 11th century AD.

Vanakkovaraiyars who were the feudatories of the Pallavas are mentioned as the rulers of *Perumbanarpadinaidu* by the inscriptions. The scholars are of opinion that Kolar, north-Arcot and Chittur were included within this region.<sup>89</sup>

Vanapuram which is known as Tiruvalam was the capital of the Banas and their genealogy begins with the puranic fame Mahabali.<sup>90</sup> In the Chiraikottam Arakkottamakkiya Kadai (சிறைக்கோட்டம் அறுக்கோட்டமாக்கிய காதை) of *Manimekhalai* the Chola queen Sirti is described as *Mavali maruman sirkelu Tirumagal* (மாவலி மருமான் சீர்கெழு திருமகள்). Here the queen Sirti is said to have belonged to the Bana family.<sup>91</sup>

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The Talagunda inscription of the Kadamba king Kakusthavarman is the earliest record that refers to the Banas. From this inscription it is evident that Mayurasarman the founder of the Kadamba dynasty had defeated the Perumbanas and they were made to pay tribute. The set back suffered by the Banas who were the feudatories of the Pallavas in the hands of the Kadambas made the Pallavas to go on a diplomatic move and reach an agreement with Mayuravarman. According to the Talagunda inscription after this incident Mayuravarman had ruled the western part of the Pallava country accepting the sovereignty.<sup>92</sup>

From the Kandalur inscription it is understood that Banas were defeated by the Gangas and were scattered in different regions.<sup>93</sup> The Chengam herostones which belong to 6th and 7th century AD refer to some of the Vanakkovaraiyars. From the herostones it is known that these chieftains who were ruling certain regions in the north Arcot area under the Pallava rulers Simhavishnu and Mahendravarman I scattered into various groups which led to the rise of various controversies about them.

Some of the herostones of the period of Mahendravarman I mention about one Vanakkovaraiyar and his four nephews. Among these nephews Porchendian is mentioned in the inscription of the 18th regnal year of

Mahendravarman and Porrokkaiyar is found in the 39th regnal year of the same king.<sup>94</sup> Through the inscription it is evident that Porchendiyan had participated in the *toru* (தூறு) and Porrokkaiyar had suffered frequently due to the attack of the neighbouring chieftains. These were mostly border conflicts and the herostones were raised for those who died in these battles.

The other nephews who were mentioned in the inscription are Ponnaramban and Kandavinnan. An inscription that belongs to the 33rd regnal year of Mahendravarman I identifies Ponnaramban as the son of Ponaimanainar (போனைமனைநார்) and Kandavinnan as the son of *Ennapandan* (இன்னபந்தன்). The conflicts that were existing among them are described in the four herostones.<sup>95</sup> These skirmishes developed as the result of cattle lifting and cattle recovering which led to the death of so many heroes on both the sides in the battlefield. From the herostones it can be inferred that long sword was much used in these conflicts.

An inscription that belongs to the period of Kampavarman provides details about the extent of Bana rule. This inscription mentions about one Vayiramegam who ruled Vanakoppadi, Eladaippadi and Miladu which are situated in the northern coast of Kaviri of Chola country.<sup>96</sup> From this it can be inferred that Vanakkovaraiyar extended their territories on calculating the strength of the rulers to whom they were subordinates.

These chieftains who were popularly known as Banas and Vanakkovaraiyar were highly courageous and they also respected heroism in warfare. The custom of raising herostones for the fallen heroes which was adopted by these chieftains had broughtforth the Chengam herostone inscription which throw light on the history of the Pallavas under whom

they were minor chieftains. Through the herostone it is understood that there were conflicts not only among major powers but also among the minor chieftains. The war usually started with cattle lifting which was termed as *Vetchi* and the efforts taken to recover the cattle was termed as *Karandai*. This practice which was in vogue during the age of Sangam was continuing in this age. These conflicts which were called *Torupusal* (தொறுப்புசல்) usually took place in the border areas. The Banas were totally exterminated during the reign of Parantaka of the imperial Chola line. After vanquishing the Banas Parantaka had entrusted the region with the Ganga king Prithvipathi II.<sup>97</sup>

### **Muttaraiyar**

*Naladiyar* one of the works that come under the Kilkankku literature refers to Muttaraiyar chieftains in two verses.<sup>98</sup> The scholars have assigned the age of Kilkankku literature between AD 300 and 600. The perseverance and the prestige of the Muttaraiyar chieftains are expressed in the two poems of *Naladiyar*. Perumuttaraiyar mentioned in *Naladiyar* was considered as Perumpidugu Mutharaiyar and based on this assumption the age of *Naladiyar* was taken to 9th century AD.

The herostone inscription that was belonging to the 7th regnal year of Narasimhavarman was discovered at Dhandanampatti.<sup>99</sup> Two Muttaraiyar chieftains are referred to in the inscription and Ponmandanar the uncle of Vanako had expanded Muttaraiyar nadu. This is mentioned in the inscription as, "முத்தரையர் நாடு பரவிய தம் சிற்றப்பாடுகள் போன்மாந்தனார் மேல் வந்த ஞன்று". When a particular region is ruled by a dynasty for a very long time the place naturally assumes the name of the dynasty. For example the

region ruled by Cholas was Cholanadu. This logic can be applied here. Since the inscription mentions the region as Muttaraisarnadu even during the rule of Narasimhavarman it can be definitely said that they ruled for a long time. Hence Muttaraiyars were in the political scenario of Tamil Nadu atleast from the 6th century AD.

There are evidences to prove that Muttaraiyars were existing as the feudatories of the Pallavas. Muttaraiyar was one among the members of the group which played a role in the accession of Nandivarman II to the Pallava throne.<sup>100</sup> Since only very powerful people can take up such a role, the important position held by the Muttaraiyar under the Pallavas cannot be minimised. There are inspirational evidences to prove that some of the regions in Thanjavur, Pudukkottai and Tiruchirappalli were under the hold of Muttaraiyar.

### **Kongar, Konganiyar and Gangas**

Y. Subbharayalu is of opinion that Kongars are Gangas who were called as Konganivarmar.<sup>101</sup> These Kongars find a place in the verses of Sangam literature. Sangam works refer to the incidents like Surappalli Thunjiya Killivalavan had driven out the Kongar and captured Kongupuram and Chera king Yanai Chelkelu (செல்கெழு) Kuttuvan had captured the Kongar nadu.<sup>102</sup> Kochenganan who had ruled around 5th century AD had won over the Kongar nadu. This incident finds a reference in the *Kalavazhi Narpadu* as "தென்னாடன் குட கொங்கன் சோழன்".<sup>103</sup>

With the support of the Chengal herostones Y. Subbharayalu assumes that these Kongar had captured *Adiyar nadu* (அதியர் நாடு) and

approached Thondainadu around the later half of the 5th century AD.<sup>104</sup> Some of the herostones belonging to the period of Simhavishnu and Mahendravarman I that were discovered at Dharmapuri mention the kings who ruled that region as *Gangadhi Arasar*. This is attested by a reference as "தக்ஞீர் நாடாளும் கங்கரைசர்".<sup>105</sup>

A number of herostones discovered at Chengal has reference about Gangar. More or less six herostones are referring them directly. Two of them are earlier to others. The herostone belonging to the 33rd regnal year of Simhavishnu and another belonging to the period of Mahendravarman with no regnal year has reference about the war conducted by the sons of the Ganga king.<sup>106</sup> The herostone belonging to the period of Mahendravarman states that the war was fought against another chief Perumugai by Ponnandiyar the son of Ganga king. From this it can be inferred that these Gangas were always at war with the neighbouring chieftains. According to the herostones these Gangas had occupied the territories in the northern border of the Pallava country. An inscription belonging to the 24th regnal year of Kampavarman refers to the incident of the Gangar fighting against the Banas and capturing Vanakoppadi.<sup>107</sup> Through such wars Ganga kings were able to establish their position in the regions of Chengam pass and Dharmapuri.

The herostones of Chengal and Dharmapuri are able to clearly reveal the historical facts that the Gangar and Banas were at loggerheads and were in conflict with each other and Banas were ultimately at loss in these wars.

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## MONARCHY

Monarchy was enlightened, benevolent and despotic in nature. The king was safe when he was in possession of an efficient army, good people, fertile land, intelligent ministers, confidential friendship and strong defence which were considered as the six *angas* of the state.<sup>108</sup> A good monarch should possess the qualities like protecting dharma, putting an end to all practices that are against dharma, courage and preserving one's own honour. The king should fundamentally possess the capacity and intelligence for governing which should come through his education and experience. All the acts of the king should be based on a clear and laud thinking which alone could help in the matter of decision making. He should have the ability to speak, indomitable energy to overcome difficulties, character, enterprising spirit and right approach. King's action should be based on the consideration of time, place and his own strength and weakness. He should have a right judgment about a friendship and should be the destroyer of the enemies. He should contribute for the fertility of the country. One who possessed the aforesaid qualities and work for the people had been described as a lion among kings.

Through the Pallava copper plate it is understood that kingship was hereditary. This fact is attested by the inscriptions of the later period and also the epics *Chilappadikaram* and *Manimekhala*. The ladies of the royal family took active part in the government and administration of the country. Charudevi the donor of Gunapadeyam copper plate had issued the order directly to the royal officials. Hence it is understood that the queen enjoyed an influential position in the realm of affairs and she would have acted as regent for her son Buddhiyankuran. The crown prince acted as viceroy in the regions under the rule of their father and they participated in the administration to gain

King had titles like Maharaja, Dharmamaharaja, Dharmamaharajadhiraja and Mahatma. Some of the birudas of the king like Kudakongan, Vadapulakkon, Thennadan were bestowed on them for their victory in war. Sambandar had called Kochenganan as '*Thiraiyudai nirai chelvan*'<sup>109</sup> which means the king was rich with the tributes of the vanquished rulers. From the Hirahadahalli copper plates it is known that Sivaskandavarman had performed yagas like Agnishtoma, Vajayapeya and Aswamedha and the king had such a nature that nobody can flout the orders passed by him. Kumaravishnu I and Simhavarman IV had performed Aswamedha yaga.<sup>110</sup> Vijaya Skandavarman is described as a king who had conducted a countless number of yagasankalpas.

Through the Pallava copper plates it is understood that the kings considered the happiness and well being of the people as yagna. Enthusiasm, nobility and consulting the peers were considered as the virtue of the king. Devadas, Brahmanas, Acharyas, elders and peers were held in high esteem by the kings.

The kings were deeply religious and were the followers of one of the four religious i.e. Saivism, Vaishnavism, Buddhism and Jainism. Generally their attitude was tolerance towards the co-religionist excepting the Kalabhras of Madurai who were bigots. Pallavas are described as Paramabhagavatas. Mahendravarman I who was a Jain was converted to Saivism by Appar. Achchyuta Vikkantan the Kalabhra king was a Buddhist but had never interfered in the affairs of other religious sects. The Pulankurichchi inscription mentions about the endowments made by Chendan to Saiva and Jain temples and it shows the catholicity of the king.<sup>111</sup> Kochenganan considered both Saivism and Vaishnavism as his two eyes and was sung in praise of by the saints of both the religious sects.

## The Personality of the King

It is said that like the welcoming spring season with the gentle breeze the kings were pleasing to the eyes and the mind of the people. Kings had hands which stretched like the trunk of an elephant. He was a *Karpagavriksha* in bountiness and the dwelling place of *Tirumagal*. They were well versed in agamas and were proficient in the art of warfare. The king was the embodiment of truth and rose to eminence by learning.<sup>112</sup> The personality of the king who is described as *ariman yendiya amalimisai erunda tiruvizh marban* (அரிமான் ஏந்திய அமளிமிசை இருந்த திருவீழ் மார்பன்) is portrayed with his dress, costumes and ornaments in the sculptures found on the walls of the *Tiruchchutramaligai* of Vaikuntaperumal temple and also in the sculptures of the *Mahavaraha* cave temple of Mamallapuram.<sup>113</sup> The kings wore silk dress which came down from the hip to the knees. The dress was pleated with tassels hanging on the sides.

The king went on royal tour to the regions that came under his sovereignty and was in constant contact with the people. He was in conversation with the people to know about the resources of the state, the well being of the people and also the conduct of royal officials. The king was in camp and the people were free to express their views to the king. On such occasions people came with a variety of articles that were available in their dwelling place and they were offered as rich tribute to the king.<sup>114</sup>

## **Yuvaraja**

The coronation of the crown prince who was next in line took place during the reign of king himself and as the would-be ruler he was entrusted with responsibilities. This made the *Yuvaraja* to gain experience at an

young age. Protecting the people around, begetting the friendship of good people and taking up the guidance of the royal officials like *amaichars* who were associated with his predecessors were considered as the duties of the *Yuvaraja*.<sup>115</sup>

### Royal Emblems - Capitals

The Pallava copper plates usually had *Nandi* as the royal emblem on seals. Cholas had tiger as emblem. Black-bug was the emblem on the seals of Banas.<sup>116</sup> Kancheepuram for the Pallavas, Uraiur for Cholas, Madurai and Kaviripumpattinam for the Kalabhras, Perumbanappadi for the Banas and Gangapadi for the Gangas were the capitals for these dynasties.

Kancheepuram, Madurai, Poompuhar and Uraiur were big cities during this period. These cities had fortresses surrounded by a big wall and a moat. The people who were living in Puhar were described as *patiyelu ariya palankudi* (பதியெலு அறியா பழங்குடி). This city had two types of settlements called *Pattinappakkam* and *Maruvurpakkam* and in between these two settlements the *Nalangadi* that is the day time market was existing which made the life of Puhar very busy. Puhar had long and broad streets where chariots were moving fast, residential quarters, the working centres of artists and artisans, flower garlands and temples of god. The city was a very busy trading centre right from the time of the age of Sangam. The business people from other countries came to Puhar to earn wealth and were living in harmony with the people here as though they were all belonging to the same land.<sup>117</sup>

Madurai was also a big city like Puhar and it was surrounded by a strong outer wall with dense forest and also a moat. This wall had certain defensive techniques which made the city unapproachable to the enemies.<sup>118</sup>

Kanchi which is described as 'Nagareshu Kanchi' by Baravi was also protected by a strong fortress which had defence equipments and had stored all the needs of the people. This enabled the Pallavas to withstand the siege raised by Pulakesin II. Kancheepuram is noted for its Ghatikas which were both educational and religious centres. Kancheepuram was converted into a granary of knowledge by the scholars and philosophers of different schools of thoughts of various religions who settled there and deliberated with each other.

### **Administrative Units**

The entire region that came under the rule of the Pallavas was called Vishaya<sup>119</sup> and this was divided into Rashtras. Karmarashtra, Mundarashtra, Sadaharirashtra, Kammakarashtra, Venkorashtras. Each rashtra was again divided into several gramas. Some of the villages mentioned in copper plates of the Pallavas are Ongodu, Urvappalli, Mangalore, Bikira, Nadandappadi, Vesandam, Vilavetti, Nedungarayam, Chendalur, Sura, Kanchivayil, Adirupappulalur, Dasanapuram, Viriparam Abithi, Melmadura, Kandugur, Kurubur, Kondamuruuvadu, Pullur, Eradi, Kodingi, Narasadu, Penngapparru, Zhagumparu (ழகும்பறு), Bagur, Nagotami, Mezhithampam (மேழிதாபம்) Chillaregakodunga, Dalura, Pulliyur, Amancherkai, Nalur, Kolivalem, Damprapam, Baguhiru and Guntur.

Since the Pallankoil copper plates mention *Perunagar nattu Amancherkai* it can be noted here that the administrative units of *nadu* and *ur* that were existing during the age of Sangam continued to be the administrative units under the Pallavas also. *Kottam* was created as a new administrative unit above *nadu* during this period, which is known through

the Pallankoil copper plates. This would have been either a bigger division of *nadu* or a number of *nadus* were brought together and called as kottam. Pulankurichchi inscription refers to *Ollaiyur Kurram* and *Mutturru Kurram*. This *Kurram* is synonymous with *nadu*. The same administrative unit was called *nadu* in some regions and *kurram* in certain other regions. Herostones mention *Venadu*, *Meekovalur nadu* as administrative units.<sup>120</sup> *Kudalur nadu* is found in the Pulankurichchi inscription. Chirraiayur, Velgur, Kuzhalur, Vellerranmangalam, Alathur, Karungalippadi, Andaippadi, Alavippadi and Perumugai are some of the gramas that were existing in Pandimangalam and Thondaimandalam.<sup>121</sup>

The literary sources like *Tirumuraigal*, *Chilappadikaram*, *Manimekhalai* and *Pathinenkilkanakku* are able to identify more than 500 villages that were existing in Tamil Nadu during this period. Among these 3/5 were found in Chola country and the rest were in other regions. Most of these gramas had temples which contributed for the prosperity of the region and also for the development of the character of the people.

## Royal Officials

The group which had been always with the king and who had counselled and guided him in the administrative affairs were called the royal officials. Some of these royal officials of the Pallavas were princes of royal family. Rajapurushas, Mahamatiras, Rashtrikas, Adhyakshas, Ayuktas, Amatyas, Naikadikas (security), grama grama bhojakas, gumikas, dhudikas and sancharantas.<sup>122</sup> Mahamatiras would have been the chief ministers. Madavikas were custom officials. Rashtrikas or rashtrabalas were the head of the *rashtras*. The princes of the royal family and the relatives of the royal household usually held high position like the viceroy of a region

and commander-in-chief.<sup>123</sup> In each region *Naiyogikas*, *Ayuktas*, *Adhyakshas* were appointed as royal officials to carry out the duties connected with the central government.

The royal order issued by the king was carried by *Sancharantas*, *Rajavallabhas*, *Vallabhas*, *Govallabhas*, *Desadhikas*, *Gramam grama bhojakas*, *Arakadhigas* who were royal officials in the second order. Among these *desadhikas*, *gramam grama bhojakas* were royal officials appointed by the king to supervise the administration of the *gramam*.<sup>124</sup> The oral order issued by the king was written by *Rahasyakrt*. The same duty was assigned to *Kanneluttalar* (கண்ணமுத்தாளர்) in Chola country.<sup>125</sup>

In the Chola country the king was amidst the royal officials called *Eimperumkulu* and *Enperayam*. *Masanam*, *Parppar*, *Maruttar*, *Nimittar* and *Amaichar* were the five royal officials who came under *Eimperumkulu*. *Amaichar*, *Purohitha*, *Senapathi*, Messenger and spy are considered as the members of *Eimperukulu* by some scholars.<sup>126</sup> *Amaichar* who does not find a reference in the age of Sangam had become an important official occupying the top most position in this age. *Amaichu* had become almost a profession and Tirukkural has laid down the qualities of an *amaichar*. *Masanam* was a representative of the people in the royal court. *Enperayam* included *Karanatilavar* (kanakkar), *Karumavidigal* (government secretary), *Kanakachurram* (treasurer), *Kadaikappalar* (store keeper) the heads of infantry, elephantry and cavalry and the representatives of the people in the city.<sup>127</sup>

An *amaichar* should possess qualities like courage, good family background, protective nature, capability and intelligence through instinct and also through learning. The *amaichar* should have the diplomatic skill to

separate a person from the influence of an enemy, to retain an able person and should try to win back a clever person who had left the court on some displeasure.<sup>128</sup>

The Pallankoil inscription had introduced *Narabhayan* as an *amaichar*. He was humble, patient, knowledgeable and got rid of fear from the minds of the people.<sup>129</sup> Senapathi is the commander-in-chief of the army. The Urvappalli plates of Simhavarman II mentioned Vishnusarman as the commander-in-chief of the army.<sup>130</sup>

In the southern part of the Tamil Nadu there were officials like Senapathi, *Ulmanaiyar*, *Attikoyattar*, *Urkaval* and *Narpartinai* (நாற்பாற்தினை) who worked as royal officials.<sup>131</sup> According to Y. Subbharayalu *Narpartinai* is considered as revenue officials.<sup>132</sup>

### **Udankootam of Chilappadikaram**

When the king was in his court or Palolakkam he was surrounded by *Asan*, *Perunjnani*, *Amaichar*, *Senapathi*, *Karumavinaijnar* (கருமவினைஞர்), *Kanakkiyal Vinaijnar* (கனக்கியல் வினைஞர்), *Tandira Vinaijnar* (தந்திர வினைஞர்), *Samayakanakkarr* and *Naligaikanakkarr* who were called as *Udankootam*. As the name Udankootam denotes this group was always with the king. The king wanted to deliberate with them on all official matters.<sup>133</sup>

### **Messengers**

A messenger should necessarily possess the qualities of lone for the king, intelligence and also laud thinking before oral commitment. The messengers felt that their prime duty is to work for the welfare and the

honour of the king and accordingly they developed the capacity to present their thought in a crisp and clear way. They avoided all those are unnecessary and irrelevant in their deliberations and presented the matter in a pleasing way so that those who hear it may receive it with good spirit.<sup>134</sup> *Chilappadikaram* refers to *Kanjugamakkal* who were messengers with good thought. In the Sangam age usually the court poets took up the job of a messenger. The work of the messenger had become professional in this period and had come under certain prescribed code of conduct. The messenger became a member of the king's *Udankootam*.

### **Espionage**

The spies were employed by the king to have first had information about the affairs of his own country and also that of the surrounding states. In order to understand the chances of victory in warfare the spies were engaged and they are considered as the two eyes of the king. The spies never revealed themselves and were able to face the opponents without fear. They had the ability to maintain secrecy on any circumstance. A matter or a plot that was discovered by one spy was confirmed by employing another spy to know about the truth and based on that the king took the decision. The king had the capacity to confidentially deliberate with one spy without the knowledge of another spy and had hold on them. Through literary sources it is evident that espionage was learnt as an art during this period.<sup>135</sup>

### **Titles and Birudas**

The eminent persons who showed proficiency in their work were bestowed with titles and *birudas*. Those who had an outstanding contribution in government service were given the title *Kavithi*. The

Senapathi who proved his might in the warfare was presented the title *Yenadi*. The *vanigar* who had contributed well in business was presented with the title *etti*. All these titles were instituted by the king and they were honoured. The king presented them some extraordinary gifts like finger ring and golden flower.<sup>136</sup>

### **Orders of the King**

The orders of the king were passed orally by the king himself. The official who heard the orders and inscribed them were *Rahasyakrt* (*rahasyadhikrt*). *Pattisarman* had acted as the *Rahasyakrt* of Sivaskandavarman. The popular Hirahadahalli plates were inscribed by him. Kulippothan, Achhyutan and Nemi were the *Rahasyakrt* of Vijaya Simhavarman II. Vesandam, Velavetti and Mangalore copper plates were inscribed by Kulippottan, Achhyutan and Nemi<sup>137</sup> respectively. The orders of the king were usually taken down on *olai* or palm leaf and then recorded in the copper plate. The orders in the *olai* were received and handed over to the concerned person by *Sancharantas*. The orders of the king were issued to the royal officials. Sometimes these orders were directly issued to the people. There were situations where the royal order was issued directly to the officials and the people. It was the responsibility of all the officials together to carryout the orders of the king.

Through the Hirahadahalli copper plates it is known that there were interferences in the functioning of the government. Sivaskandavarman had made a remark towards the last portion of Hirahadahalli plates that a person who was responsible for the default of the grant though he might be close to the king or the royal family was liable for severe punishment.

## **Administration of Justice**

King as the head of the state was the fountain of justice. Justice in general was rough and ready made and many issues were argued and decided in the king's court itself. There were occasions where the person who was affected by the act of the king himself had the freedom to go directly to the king and argue his case. In such a situation also justice was based on reason. Kannagi with her *Chilambu* as evidence was able to argue her case right in front of the king about the injustice done to her husband. This is a good example of righteousness adopted by the king in justice.

Saintly persons without living upto that mark and committing unsaintly acts, betrayal of their husbands by women, harm done to the king by the *amaichar*, man having illegal contact with the other person's wife, those who produce false evidences, persons uttering falsehood about others and stealing were some of the most common crimes found in the society<sup>138</sup> and those who were involved in them were severely punished. The confiscation of land given as grant was considered as a sin and was compared with the sin that may befall on a person who had killed a hundred thousand cows.<sup>139</sup>

Among the different types of crimes theft was carried in a very intelligent way. It is amazing to note here that there was a book called *Kalavunul* which narrated in detail about the ways and means of thieving. The robber used certain common instruments like *Kannagam* and *Kavaikul* for opening the doors of the house. *Mantharam* (magic), *Deivam*, medicine, *nimittam*, *thandiram* (trick), place, time and instruments - all these eight different aspects were considered by the thieves before they acted. The robbers were in disguise as messengers in the morning and as women in the

night and without the knowledge of anybody they were able to get into the palace, even into the private chamber of the king and were able to carry out theft.<sup>140</sup>

Punishments were given not only to those who had committed the crime but also to those who were responsible for an act of crime. Crimes were taken to the notice of the king by security men and experienced peers. There were instances where a person was punished without adopting to the procedures of justice. A person who was undergoing rigorous imprisonment was released on the recommendations of the influential people from royal household and as well as the society.

For certain crimes *dandam* that is fine was imposed. Those who defied the orders of the king had to undergo physical torture. Capital punishment was the final and was given in the case of severe crimes like treason. The criminals and those on whom there was a charge of crime were put together in the prison which was not a healthy practice. The prisons were well guarded.

*Karanas* were the court of justice in the grama and *adhikaranas* were those in cities. The fines imposed by *karanas* were *Karanadandam* and those fines imposed by *adhikaranas* were *adhikaranadandam*. The court of justice was *dharmasana* or it was even considered as the seat of the king from which he passed judgement.<sup>141</sup>

Mattavilasaprahasanam the satire authored by Mahendravarman I describes the foul practices adopted by the court of justice. Those who were affluent were able to silence the officials of the court with the power of money and were able to alter justice to their whims and fancies.

One *Kapalika* who was walking along with his maid servant in a drunken mood had lost his *kapalam* or skull that he was holding as *bikshapatra*. He decided that it was stolen by the Buddhist monk who was passing by that way. He insisted on the monk to return his *bikshapatra* and both of them had run into arguments which had become serious. One Pasupatha who came by that way was requested by the Kapalika to mediate. The Pasupatha expressed his inability to solve the issue and had advised them to approach the court. In this context of the work Mattavilasaprahasanam through the utterances of Devasoma the maid servant of the Kapalika the author is exposing fraudulent practices adopted by the courts. She said that the Pasupatha who enjoyed a comfortable life in the *mada* could spend the money and silence the officials of the court and could twist justice in his favour. But this was not possible for a Kapalika whose only possession was the skull held as *bikshapatra*.<sup>142</sup> It should be specially mentioned here that the person who had elaborately discussed about the disorders in the court is none but the king Mahendravarman himself.

### **Diplomacy and Warfare**

War was an unavoidable situation in those times. The ruling dynasties like the Pallavas, Cholas, Kalabhras and minor chieftains had conducted both defensive and offensive wars. There were books that were able to give guidance to the kings concerning defensive mechanisms that could be adopted in wars as a way towards success. *Tirukkural* is a very rich political treatise which is replete with ideas about diplomacy and warfare.

During war the kings were on diplomatic move and formal alliances and counter alliances. According to their status, need and capacity the kings maintained an army to conduct war in order to protect the country from internal disorders and external aggression. There was a standing army and at the time of war a well defined army was in operation. Chariots, Elephantry, Cavalry and Infantry were the four wings of the army.

"கொடுஞ்சி நெடுந்தே ரைம்பதிற் நிரட்டியுங்  
கடுங்களி யானை போரையுஞ் ஏறும்  
மையீ ராயிரங் கொய்யுளப் புரவி  
நெடுந்தேர் கொடுஞ்சியுங் கடுங்களிற் நெருத்தமும்  
விடும்பரிக் குதிரையின் வெரிதும் பாழ்பட  
வெருமைக் கடும்பாரி யூர்வோ ணியிர்த் தொகை  
யோருபக லெல்லையி ணுண்ணு மென்ப."

The aforesaid verses of *Chilappadikaram* describe the capability of the army and also the role played by chariots, elephants and horses in the war.<sup>143</sup>

### **Elephantry**

*Eniyavai Narpadu* (இனியவை நாற்பது) says that "yanai udaiya padai kandal mun enithe"<sup>144</sup> (யானை உடைய படை காண்டல் முன் இனிதே). It explains the importance of elephants in the warfare. The Pallava copper plates give a detailed description of the role of elephants in the battlefield.<sup>145</sup> The role of elephants in the battle conducted by Kochenganan is known through literature.<sup>146</sup>

## Chariots

"காலும் புரவி யணித்தேர்த் தானையோடு  
 கறைத்தோன் மறவர் கடுந்தே ரூரூந்  
 வெண்கோட் டியயைஞ் விரைவிக் குதிரையர்  
 அடுந்தேர்த் தானை யாரிய வரசர்  
 கடும்படை மாக்களைக் கொன்று களங்குவித்து  
 நெடுந்தேர்க் கொடுஞ்சியுங் கடுங்களிற் நெருத்தமும்  
 விடும்பரிக் குதிரையின் வெரிதும் பாழ்பட  
 காய்வேற் றட்கனக்கக் களக்ஞும் விசயனும்  
 ஜம்பத்திருவர் குரவை முதல்வனை வாழ்த்திப்  
 பின்நேர்க் குரவை பேயாடு பறந்தலை."

From the above lines it is evident that chariots were also used in the battlefield. It is said that when Chenguttuvan went on an expedition towards north fifty two chariots with riders had accompanied him.<sup>147</sup> From the term "*poriman punaittin ther*" (பொறிமாண் புனைத்தின் தேர்) it is understood that there were chariots which were operated through some mechanical device.<sup>148</sup> Kuram copper plates which give a detailed account of the war between the Pallavas and Chalukyas do not mention about the chariots and their role in the battlefield. This raises a doubt and perhaps chariots were not used by the Pallavas in war. In this context it is appropriate to mention here, in the sculptural panel representing a war scene which is found in the Tiruchchurrumaligai of Vaikuntaperumal temple elephants and horses find a place but chariot is missing.<sup>149</sup>

## Cavalry

The role of horses in the battlefield was predominantly seen in the age of Sangam itself.

"யானை வீரரு மிழுளித் தலைவரும்  
 வாய் வான் மறவரும் வாள்பல னேத்த  
 ஆடியல் யானையுந் தேருமாவும்  
 பீடுகெழு மறவரும் பிறழாக் காப்பிற்"

The above lines picturise the participation of horses in the war. The Kuram plates of Parameswaravarman I describe the part played by the swift moving horses in the battlefield. The horses of the king were called by names. Adhisayam was the name of the horse used by Parameswaravarman I in the battlefield.<sup>150</sup>

### **Infantry**

Foot soldiers are the most important wing of the army. The success in war depend highly on the character and strength of the infantry. In the time of peace soldiers were engaged in other duties like *nadukaval* and *urkaval*. The infantry had inner divisions which were based on the weapons used by them in the war. Some of these weapons are bow and arrow, dagger, sword, *vel*, *thomaram*, *sakti*, *prasam*, *gada kanaiyam*, *kaarpanam* and *chakra*. The soldiers were trained in the art of using these weapons. Kuram plates had recorded incidents where the soldiers with the undaunted spirit had fought in the battles and laid down their life.

### **Journey towards war**

Soon after the announcement of war an auspicious day was decided by the *nimittakkarar* and on that day the king's umbrella and sword were taken on the royal elephant which led the march towards the battle scene. The king directly went to the camp where the leaders of the army and

soldiers had gathered and they were given a good feast. This practice which was called Perumchoridudal was existing even during the age of Sangam. Then they worshipped the deity who was mostly *Korrvai* and proceeded to the battlefield. At that time the members of the royal court and those who were well versed in dance and music wished the king and the artists were singing and dancing in praise of him. Apart from the leaders of the armed forces and the four divisions of the army the others who accompanied the king were hundreds of artists in dance and music, experts in playing musical instruments and comedians (நகைவேழப்பர்). These artists entertained the soldiers at the time of their fatigue and distress. The food products, weapons of war and other items needed by soldiers were carried in a number of carts. The royal officials were also proceeding with the army. In terms of need the king consulted the concerned officials then and there and took a decision about the war proceedings.<sup>151</sup>

*Chilappadikaram*, *Kalavazhi Narpadu* and the Kuram copper plates of Paramesvaravarman I are very rich sources and provide information about the military organisation and warfare during the period between AD 300 and AD 600.

## Taxation

*Tirukkural* says

"பெரும்பொருளால் பெட்டக்க தாகி அருங்கேட்டால்  
ஆற்ற விளைவது நாடு"

A country should have enormous wealth and resources and should be free from evils. Tamil Nadu was the role model for the above *Tirukkural* in those times. The rich agricultural lands and water resources which

contributed for the prosperity of the state enabled the kings to maintain their prestige and power. The taxes that were levied on the people and the booty from war were the main income of the state. The Pallavas, the Cholas and the Kalabhras were in constant war among themselves. Their success in war enabled to collect rich tributes and fill in the treasury.

The land tax was the major source of revenue. Other sources of income were taxes levied on articles produced on trade and business and also on certain economic measures taken by the government for the benefit of the people. These included tax on various professions and trade articles. Tax on shops, tax on implement of production and also tax on certain social groups. *Dandam* otherwise fines collected for the various types of offences were also a part of the income of the state.

King alone had the right to levy a tax. A major income of the state was from land. Taxes were imposed only on the cultivable lands. Tax was collected according to the size or rather the area of the land. This brought forth the necessity to measure the lands. *Nivartana*, *Pattika* and *Kanduga* are some of the land measurements that are mentioned in the Pallava copper plates. The fixation of land tax was based on the nature and fertility of the soil and also the crop that was produced. This land tax was also collected as articles. Sometimes instead of paying a tax the government issued orders to the village assemblies to provide food, water, milk, curd, vegetables and flowers to the government officials who might have stayed there with official purpose.<sup>152</sup> Apart from these they should be supplied for the other needs like fuel for food, bullock carts to carry things, houses for the officials to stay and cot to sleep. The taxes that are called as *Echchoru* and *Chorrumathu* came under the above category.

Production of salt was the monopoly of the state. During the age of Kautilya individuals were producing salt with the prior permission of the state for which they had to pay tax. According to P. Shanmugam during the rule of the Pallavas salt was produced by the individuals also.<sup>153</sup> The state monopoly of salt production which was called Alankulasobam in Prakrit was later on called as Uppukkochaigai.

With the support of Hirahadahalli plates C. Minakshi says that production of sugar just like salt was again a monopoly of the state.<sup>154</sup> According to this plate the people were paying eighteen different types of taxes. Brahmadeya lands that is the lands gifted to brahmins were exempted from all these taxes. From the Hirahadahalli plates it is understood that toddy drawing was also the monopoly of the state. Since Brahmadeya lands were exempted from the taxes on toddy drawing, it can be inferred that *Elevas* could not draw toddy without the permission of brahmins in the Brahmadeya lands. According to P. Shanmugam the *Elevas* had to pay a tax for toddy drawing which was called *Elamputchi* (எலம்புட்சி).<sup>155</sup>

The people who were paying taxes to the government were called as *Karaikelu makkal*.<sup>156</sup> The people who were engaged in various occupations had to pay professional taxes according to the nature of work. According to the Vilavetti plates those who work on leather, textiles, shop keepers, metal workers, those who perform gymnastics, shop keepers of different articles, actors, those who dig well, weavers, gamblers, barbers artisans and *nagalar* who were exterminated from the caste were paying tax. Tax was collected for conducting the marriage which was later on called as *Kannalakanam* - a tax was paid by the religious group ajivikas.<sup>157</sup>

The people who were engaged in oil pressing had to pay taxes called *Chekku* and *Chekkukkadamai*. *Pattinacheri* was a tax paid by those who were engaged in fishing in lake, tank and sea. *Edaiyar* community who were making a living by cattle rearing and sale of milk and milk products had paid the tax *Edaiputchi*.<sup>158</sup>

Tariff and customs were also the main income of the state. The existence of custom houses and collection of customs are already mentioned in *Pattinappalai* and *Perumbanarruppadaai*.<sup>159</sup> The merchandise that were reaching through land and as well as sea were taxed according to their quality and need. The *dandam* that was imposed on those who committed crimes was also a part of the income of the state. Movable properties in the form of different articles and immovable properties like land which were confiscated by the state as punishment for the crimes that were committed were also included in the revenues of the state.

The rich tribute paid by the vanquished rulers constituted a major share of income of the state. It is appropriate to mentioned here that Kochenganan was called as "*tiraiyudai nirai selvan'* (திறையுடை நிறை செல்வன்).

### **Tax Exemption**

There is no clear idea concerning the lands that were declared tax free. But still areas of settlement, residential lands, roads, canals, the public lands of the *grama* and temples were exempted from taxes. The lands that were endowed to the temples and brahmins were exempted from taxes. This gift came under two categories. The land gifted by the government was made tax free and thereby the government was at the loss of income. When

individuals gifted land an amount was paid to the village administrative body for the exemption of taxes. This later on became Iraikaval.<sup>160</sup> It was the responsibility of the village administrative body either to pay the amount to the government or to deposit the money and remit the interest gained out of it to the government.

### **Land Measurement**

Lands under the state were measured and all the details about them were recorded. These records were maintained by government officials at *grama* and *nadu*. When kings donated lands or *gramas* as *brahmadeya* or *charaniya grama* the details of already given *devabhoga* were recorded and those lands were exempted. The copper plates mention the term "*devabhoga ulavu neeki* (தேவபோக உழவு நீக்கி). When a land gift was made the details regarding earlier ownership, names, land measurement, the boundaries of the land on four sides were all recorded. According to C. Minakshi the term *ulavu bhumi* was the area of land cultivated with the plough and two oxen within a stipulated time.<sup>161</sup>

*Nivartana, pattika* and *kanduka* were some of the land measurements under the Pallavas. The Pallava king Vishnugopavarman's Uruvappalli plates mention about the measurement of land and also so many other details like the boundaries of land, names of the neighbouring villages, rivers, gardens, trees, fruit groves and directions.<sup>162</sup> The land was endowed as *devabhoga* to the *Vishnuhara devakulam*, the temple built by Vishnuvarman the Senapathi of the king. It was granted after the exemption of eighteen types of taxes. This sort of details are found in Sura, Ongodu II and Pallankkoil copper plates.

In general the king was the owner of all lands. But still he possessed personal property. From his own personal property a portion of the land was gifted by the king. Kumaravishnu had owned 800 *nivartanas* of land at Chendarur in Kavachakara bhoga in Kamma Maharashtra. Out of this, 432 *nivartanas* of land was donated to Bavaskandadradan who was living at Pullur as *brahmadeya*.<sup>163</sup>

The sources reveal the existence of an elaborate system of taxation and also the details on land revenue.

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**S O C I E T Y**

## Chapter III

# SOCIETY

Since the period taken for study follows the age of Sangam it is found that some aspects of the social life of the earlier period were still existing and at the same time the society had undergone certain striking changes.

It is well known that from the age of Tolkappiyam the four main social groups *Andanar*, *Arasar*, *Vanigar* and *Vellalar* were existing in Tamil country.<sup>1</sup> There were streets in the town in which these four social groups were living separately. Based on the beliefs of the people these four social groups were represented by four different *varuna bhutas*.<sup>2</sup> These four social groups were involved in four different types of occupations and had a life pattern of their own.

### Brahmins

During the period the Brahmins had become the most powerful and influential group in the society. Since the services of the Brahmins became a necessity for the king to conduct *yagas* and also to perform other religious ceremonies they were given prime importance. *Purohitas* were among the officials of the king who were in *Eimperumkulu*. The majority of the endowments made by the Pallavas had been given as *brahmadeya* to the learned brahmins. From this it is understood that the brahmins had land lards and possessed property which enhanced their social status. This is a major change witnessed during the period.

Brahmins who are referred to as '*Irupirappalar*' in the Pallava copper plates<sup>3</sup> and the epics<sup>4</sup> considered *mukti* or salvation as their goal in life. They performed *agnihotram* and *yagas* and were proficient in *Chaturvedas* and conducted *Deva yaga*, *Brahma yaga*, *Bhuta yaga*, *Manushrya yagna* and ancestral *yagna* were the five big *yagas* that were performed by the brahmins.<sup>5</sup> Brahmins recited Vedas and *yagas* and also helped others to perform the *yagas*. They had given charity and also accepted charity.<sup>6</sup> These were the major activities of the brahmins in that age.

The brahmins had *jatabhara* and were wearing wet clothes and the *Yagnopavitha* worn by them was the most symbolic.<sup>7</sup> *Thandu*, *Kundigai*, white *padaraksha* were there belonging.<sup>8</sup> They had a tuft of hair and sometimes this tuft was very small like the bud of the *Neidal* flower.<sup>9</sup> From the Pallava copper plate it is understood brahmins were identified by their *gotra* and *sutra*. These *gotras* are mostly the names of the *rishis* of the north Indian tradition. The brahmins were also called as *Vadamoliyalargal* (வடமோழியாளர்கள்).

It is understood through the Pallava copper plates that the brahmins were expected to be well versed in Vedas. Such brahmins who were proficient in Vedas were gifted lands which were exempted from all taxes.<sup>10</sup> By satisfying the brahmins through such gifts the king was able to attain longevity in life and also strength and victory. This sort of belief resulted in kings endowing lands to brahmins. All rights and privileges of the land that had been gifted to brahmins were enjoyed by them and was called *brahmadeya* rights.<sup>11</sup> The Sura copper plate of Vishnugopavarman mentions the ancestors of the donee of the particular family who should have enjoyed great reputation in the society. The brahmins who were associated with the king and his court were called as *Rajarishis*.<sup>12</sup>

From the Velvikkudi copper plates it is understood that *brahmadeya* grants were in existence from the age of Sangam. But the term *brahmadeya* is found for the first time only in Pallava copper plates. These *brahmadeya* villages were granted either to a single individual or to two persons or to a group of persons.<sup>13</sup> The gardens and groves of the Chillarega Kodunga *grama* were gifted to the son-in-law, brother and such other relatives of the donee.<sup>14</sup>

The kings were very particular in protecting the property of the brahmins. The property of the brahmins was considered like poison. The poison may injure only a person. But if a brahmins property is confiscated not only the person but also the generation in future may suffer due to the inglorious act. Such warnings were taken seriously by the society.<sup>15</sup> Through their power and influence the brahmins were able to create such ideas and enhance their position further.

Brahmins played the prime role in the big *yagas* like *Vajapeya*, *Angnishtoma* and *Aswamedha* that were conducted by the Pallava kings. The king consulted the brahmins for all the auspicious ceremonies in the palace.<sup>16</sup> Since the Pallava copper plates mention that the kings treated the god, *Irupirappalar*, guru and elders with respect it is understood that brahmins were the single social group who were highly revered by the society.

The brahmins who were proficient in *Chaturvedas* were called as *Nanmaraiyalargal* and others took their guidance.<sup>17</sup> They should satisfy the *devas* by the performance of *yagas*, the sages through the recitation of Vedas and their ancestors through creating a progeny.<sup>18</sup> The ears were used to hearing only the sound of the Vedas and not the sound of the hell calling for justice. From this it can be understood that Vedas were very popular in Tamil

Nadu during the age.<sup>19</sup> The literature mentions that it was unworthy to listen to the words of a brahmin who had not studied Vedas. From this it can be inferred that there were brahmins who had not strictly adhered to their own profession.<sup>20</sup>

Apart from reciting Vedas, performing *yagas* and acting as *purohita*, brahmins were employed in certain other duties. Pattisamman who engraved the Hirahadahalli copper plates was employed as the *bhojaka* of Kolivalam and was also a personal secretary to the king. The Mangalore plate was engraved by a brahmin named Nemi. The Pallava king Vishnugopan had endowed to a temple constructed by his Senapathi Vishnusarman. Since the name suggests that he would have been a brahmin it can be inferred that brahmins were also employed as Senapathi. Paranjyothishi, the able general of the Pallava king Narasimhavarman I was a brahmin. Brahmins had also acted as messengers.<sup>21</sup> When the kings went wrong some of the brahmins who exerted the influence in the court were able to counsel and correct them.<sup>22</sup>

Though the brahmins were highly an influential group in the society they were sometimes convicted for crimes which were not committed by them.<sup>23</sup>

### **Vanigar**

Since the economy very much depended on trade and commerce the merchant community had a status almost equal to the king and were called *arasarukku pinnor*<sup>24</sup> (அரசருக்கு பின்னோர்). Among the merchant community there was a group which was highly affluent and held a prestigious status in the society. Such merchants were called Perumkudi Vanigar. They enjoyed the same respect that was given to the king.<sup>25</sup> The princes of royal family, their relatives and also the merchant community participated together during

the occasion of festival. This shows that merchant community was treated on par with the members of the royal family.<sup>26</sup>

The merchandise imported from overseas were deposited in the big godowns in the coastal regions. The big merchants of Puhar announced about the arrival of cargo in the port. Some times flags were hoisted on the occasion. The smaller merchants brought the goods for sale.<sup>27</sup> There were whole salers and retailers among merchants.

The big mansions of the affluent merchants were guarded by security men.<sup>28</sup> Merchants came under different categories based on the goods produced by them like grain merchant (*Kulavanigar*), oil merchants (*Yennaivanigar*), textile merchants (*Aruvaivanigar*), salt merchants (*Uppuvanigar*) etc.

When the big merchant families went to another place they were received well and treated with utmost warmth and care by the merchants of equal status. They were accommodated with all comforts in the well guarded mansions.<sup>29</sup> The big merchant families even at the time of their misfortune had never come down low from their character and behaviour. This is known through the utterances of Kaundiyadigal to Madari in the epic Chilappadikaram in the context of Kannagi left behind under her care. Perumkudivanigar that is the big merchant community maintained contacts only with the merchants of their own status.<sup>30</sup>

The hero of the epic Chilappadikaram had the determination to sell the anklet (*chilambu*) of his wife and make it the capital to regain his lost wealth. Thus the merchants had the morale, courage and determination to over come the depressed situation and earn the lost wealth.

The Permkudivanigar community were involved in various types of entertainments. They took keen interest in fine arts and were unmindful of spending their wealth to promote fine arts.<sup>31</sup>

There were separate colonies in Puhar where the merchants from Rome, Greece and Arabia were residing. These merchants who stayed in Tamil Nadu with the aim of accumulating wealth were living together with the native people as though they all belonged to one place.<sup>32</sup> There were big merchants in Puhar who were dealing with precious stones like diamond and ruby as the major items of trade.<sup>33</sup> *Chilappadikaram* refers to one Arattan Chetti which indicates that Chettis were also Vanigar community.<sup>34</sup> The merchants who had established themselves as outstanding in their profession were recognised by the government and were honoured with the title *Etti*.<sup>35</sup> These merchants who had earned the title *Etti* held a reputed position as that of the king in the society.<sup>36</sup>

There were merchants who had lost their wealth by cultivating habits like gambling. Some of them who were over indulged with the prostitutes had also lost their wealth to them.<sup>37</sup>

### **Velalar**

Velalar who were agriculturists were associated with the *Marudam* land from the age of Sangam. Cultivation work was carried on not only in *Marudam* but also in *Kurinji*. Agriculturists are referred to as Velalar for the first time in Paripadal.<sup>38</sup> Land and cattle were considered as wealth and the word *madu* actually meant wealth. Since cattle is a wealth associated with land the cultivators were called *Erududaiyan Velalan*<sup>39</sup> (எருதுணையான் வேலாளன்).

Though the sustenance of the society was based on different types of trade and occupation, agriculturists were the pivot of the society. The cultivators who contribute for the enhancement of the wealth of the country by increasing the production were considered as the single community which had the capacity to bring a number of kings under the shade of their umbrella. Thus they only protected the poignancy of the monarchy. Velalar who were responsible for food production were the backbone of the economy and were not in the need of depending on others. Even the *rishis* and yogis who had negated worldly life cannot thrive if agriculture failed.<sup>40</sup> Many other occupations were depending on agriculture. Since Velalars were the community who were favoured by all people they were called as *Vizhkudi Ulavargal*<sup>41</sup> (வீழ்குடி உலாவர்கள்). The popular *Indira Vizha* (இந்திர விழா) festival of Puhar was dedicated to Indira the god of *Marudam* land and the festival honoured agriculturists.

### **Idaiyar**

The Sangam literature refers to Idaiyargal as the people of the *Mullai* land. Some facts about these people are available in this period also. These people were living mostly in the outskirts of the village or town which is mentioned in the literature as *Purancheri*. The Idaiyar lived in a simple life by rearing the cattle and selling milk and milk products. They were called as Kovalar.<sup>42</sup> The Idaiyar women earned their living by selling butter milk in huge pots.<sup>43</sup> On hearing the sound of the drum that woke up the royal household of the palace, the Idaiyar community started making ghee and had sent it in turn to the palace.<sup>44</sup> The Idaiyar who earned a living by selling butter milk lived in small huts made of red sand. This small house of the Idaiyar was fenced.<sup>45</sup>

## **Maravar**

Maravar or Vettuvar were the people who lived in the *Palai* land. Since it was a dryland without resources the people of *Palai* adopted a life of robbery or thieving. The wealth that they gained in this way made them feel happy. They celebrated their victory by consuming intoxicants. *Korrvai* was the deity worshipped by them. At the altar of *Korrvai* sacrifices were made. They cooked rice and mixed it with meat which was called *ninachchoru* (நினச்சோறு) and was offered to *Korrvai*. Cattle were mainly lifted by these Vettuvar community. They were a sort of unethical group who took pleasure in cutting other people's head and counting them.<sup>46</sup>

## **Kuravar**

Kuravar and Kurathiyan were the people who lived in the hilly region. They also lived a simple life. They were involved in occupations like collecting honey from the beehives and capturing elephants by adopting certain methods. Though the Kuravar and Kurattiyan were living in the hilly region they were highly cultured. This is known from the reference of these people found in *Chilappadikaram*. It is said that Senguttuvan who was camping at the hilly region of the Chera country was received with warmth and affection by the Kuravar community. They had offered the king all the products that were available in the hilly region. This was a pleasant gesture of the people living in the hilly region.<sup>47</sup>

## Other People

On the coastal regions of Puhar which was called as Pattinappakkam, Paratavas were living. These *Paratavas* went into the deep sea since fishing which was their occupation for living.<sup>48</sup>

There were people who were involved in different types of occupation. The people who were weaving silk were *Pattusaliyar*. There were people who were involved in weaving cotton also. Those who produced and sold betal leaf were *Pasavar*. The people who prepared *Takkulam* or *Panchavasam* which was chewed after dinner were called *Vasavar*. There were people who were involved in metallurgy on bronze, copper and gold. Goldsmiths and carpenters had an important role in the society. Other people were identified through their occupation like those who work on precious stone, pearls and also iron and leather. Sculptors, musicians, physicians and astrologers were also a part of the society. The people who cut bangles out of *sanku* were another important group. Those who made garlands out of flowers were identified by their occupation. Women were employed in various occupations. Artisans were a big group. Prostitutes were living in Puhar in separate streets. *Meecha* women were engaged in different occupations.<sup>49</sup>

Among the people who were engaged in various occupations the goldsmiths of the palace enjoyed a very influential position in the society. When such goldsmiths walked in the street they were followed by their assistants who were nearly hundred in number.<sup>50</sup> The people gave them way without hindrance as they did for the respectable people in the society.<sup>51</sup>

Sirupanchamulam, one of the works that comes under Pathinenkilkkanakku literature mentions the existence of female slaves. From this it is understood that slaves were a part of the society and they were discriminated from the other social groups. There were *Vambapparattaiyar* (வம்பப்பரத்தையர்) who had the habit of gossiping about others<sup>52</sup> and this serves as the example to note that certain social behaviours continued to exist till date. Though Puhar in those days was a resourceful city with its richness there were people who were living below poverty line.<sup>53</sup>

It was considered below dignity to do the work of the people of the lower strata of the society.<sup>54</sup> If members of the upper class happened to touch those of the lower class it was considered a sin and they cleansed themselves by a bath.<sup>55</sup> When the upper class was moving in the streets the lower class had to stand quite a distance away from their visible range.<sup>56</sup> This sort of social injustice proves beyond doubt that caste consciousness and discriminatory treatment were prevalent during the period. Even while cremating the dead, the rituals and practices of the concerned castes were strictly followed,<sup>57</sup> showing that caste consciousness was deep rooted.

## **Women**

The family ties and understanding were very much dependent on the relationship between the man and the woman. But still the role of women is of prime importance while considering the family welfare. Women take the greatest responsibility of begetting and bringing up the children. So naturally when a woman goes wrong it may disturb the family ties which may ultimately reflect on the society also. In this background much emphasis was laid on chastity as the finest virtue that to women. Though *Kalavu*, a pre-marital relationship between a man and a woman was an accepted social

behaviour in the Sangam era, chastity was given prominence while considering the virtues in women. *Tirukkural* also stressed on the virtues of women while considering family welfare.<sup>58</sup>

An extraordinary change witnessed during the period was the over exemplification of chastity in women and deification of chaste women. The age saw the practice of raising *kottam* (temple) for a chaste woman and the development of *patni* cult. The society could have undergone certain moral degradation and this should have led to the development of such concepts. By exalting woman to the status of a demi-god and emphasising on chastity as the supreme virtue found in women, a restriction was brought in her social behaviour in this age. Women had developed the quality of tolerance and were able to withstand all the wrongs that were done to her. Kannagi the heroine of the epic *Chilappadikaram* stands as a good example to this sort of change.

As a mother it is the prime duty of the women to take care of the child in the prenatal period. She should strive hard to bring up the child and make him a responsible citizen of the society.<sup>59</sup> A childless woman was not much recognised by the society. Pregnancy or motherhood is considered as a blessing for woman but there also she had to undergo a lot of trials tribulations before delivering the child. She had to undergo a lot of worries and anxieties in bringing up the child.<sup>60</sup> For a woman the major part of her life was spent in shouldering household responsibilities of different nature.

All types of household duties were assigned to women. Her work started even before dawn. She should keep the courtyard tidy and sprinkle water. She was in the habit of drawing *kolams* in the courtyard which was

learnt by her as an art with the atmost perfection.<sup>61</sup> This practice exists in Tamil Nadu even today. After this her main work was cooking.

Kilkanakku literature emphasises on child care. Woman should take precautionary measures to protect the child during the prenatal stage and also after the birth at the infancy stage. The mother should be careful in lifting the child since any wrong done may affect the tender nerves of the child. The child should be administered medicine in the proper procedure. The mother should not create fear in the mind of the child by quoting wrong ideas like evil spirits since it may mar the personality development of the child.<sup>62</sup> It is astonishing that such thoughts of child development were found in that age.

There were women who had displeasing qualities. There were women who unnecessarily became the cause for the anger of her husband and openly protested. She even went to the extent of not cooking food or eating up what she had cooked without serving her husband.<sup>63</sup> Though the exact circumstances are not known it is understood that women were capable of doing wrongs. Such instances would have been less while considering the male chauvinism of the age.

There were instances of man leaving his wife and living with another man's wife.<sup>64</sup> This had been pointed out by *Tirukkural* in the chapter *Piranmanai Nayavamai* (பிரன்மனை நயவாமை). In the same way woman also disregarded the virtues that were expected in her and lived with another man.<sup>65</sup> There were women disloyal to husbands.<sup>66</sup> It was generally believed that a man who was lacking in self control was not fit to live with his mother, sister and daughter.<sup>67</sup> From this idea it can be presumed that the crime of incest was in the society and certain precautions and warnings were necessary to maintain the moral standards in social life.

The habit of a man living with another woman or a prostitute is mostly associated with the life pattern of *Marudam* land in the Sangam age. On such occasion the wife openly showed her resentment and closed the doors against him. She never permitted him inside her home. In this situation usually a friend (தோழி) consoled her and brought peace between them. As against this, the concept that the conflict between the man and woman should never come out of the four walls of their home had developed. Women felt that the prestige of the family should be protected and also she should safeguard the family ties. Instead of showing open protestation women observed tolerance. This was a striking change concerning the attitude of women found in this period.

Though as *Tirukkural* says, "தெய்வத் தொழுஅன் கொமுநன் தொழுதெழுவான்" (she worships only her husband as god) was the nature of woman when occasion demanded she never failed to express her displeasure. This she had done in her own way and can be realised from the following statement of Kannagi in *Chilappadikaram*.

"அறவோர்க் களித்தலு மந்தண ரோம்பலும்  
துறவோர்க் கெதிர்தலுந் தொல்லோர் சிறப்பின  
விருந்தெதிர் கோடலு மிழந்த வென்னை"68

"மன்பெருஞ் சிறப்பின் மாநிதிக் கிழவன்  
முந்தை நில்லா முனிவிகந் தனனா  
அற்புளஞ் சிறந்தாவ கருண்மொழியளைஇ  
எற்பாராட்ட யானகத் தொளித்த  
நோயுந் துன்பமு நொடிவது போலுமேன்  
வாயன் முநுவற்கவ ருள்ளகம் வருந்தப்  
போற்றா வொழுக்கம் புரிந்தீர"69

There are evidences in the literature about man beating the woman with the stick.<sup>70</sup> Thus men over powering women and ill-treating them are found in all ages. Through the literature it is evident that there were husbands

who were seared of their wives.<sup>71</sup> From the term '*nirappidumbai palpandiralan*'<sup>72</sup> (நிரப்பிடும்பை பல்பெண்டிராளன்) it is known that polygamy was in practice. There is no reference in the literature or the other sources about the existence of polyandry.

Some times there was no security for girls when they went out and they were even kidnapped. There are instances where men placed women in an awkward position by indulging in eve teasing.<sup>73</sup>

The ladies of the palace took keen interest in the affairs of the state and some times their ideas and suggestions were given due consideration treated with importance.<sup>74</sup> The queens and the ladies of the royal household were in possession of personal property, which they used at their wish and fancy. They were pleased to use them for charity purposes. Charudevi the donor of Gunapadeyam grant had endowed land to the temple. In the big merchant families when the girls were settled separately after marriage they were given enormous wealth and also several servants to maintain their new homes.<sup>75</sup> The women of royal household and those of the affluent group like great merchants were able to enjoy such privileges. An ordinary woman's life was one of toil and hardship.

Since the women of the affluent section of the society did not have the opportunity, to go out they had developed interest in indoor games like *Vattaduthal*. They found pleasure in possessing parrots and feeding them with milk.<sup>76</sup> These parrots were taught to repeat certain familiar words. The little girls used to shape the sand of the river beds in the form of a male figure. This *manarpavai* was imagined to be the husband of one of her friends and they played.<sup>77</sup> Sometimes these figures made out of sand did not get destroyed.<sup>78</sup>

There were learned women well versed in writing poetry during the Sangam age. Sangam literature identifies nearly forty eight women poets. Women's participation in the intellectual and religious discourses during the occasion of festival at Avur is expressed by Sambandar in his *Avurpathigam*.<sup>79</sup> Among the *Kilkanakku* works no contribution of women is found. Some of the verses of *Kilkanakku* works whose date is assigned between the age of Sangam and the age of Sambandar that is 7th century do not encourage participation of women in intellectual activities. Much is spoken against woman's entry into public life or she arguing a case in the *sabha* or court.<sup>80</sup> On contrary to these ideas expressed in literature *Manimekhalai* who had followed Buddhism and had led a saintly life was active in the participation of religious discourses and she had also worked for public welfare. Kannagi entered the court of the king in all fury and argued her case with evidence and proved the innocence of her husband. She succeeded in establishing justice in the royal court. In those days also as in the modern times there were women who were actively participated in public life though they would have been a small group.

There were women with evil designs like producing false evidences in the courts against their own husbands and putting them to torture.<sup>81</sup> From this it is evident that women were capable of all types of malpractices and she would even go to the extent of tarnishing the image of her husband. One is not sure about the circumstances under which the woman adopted such extreme practices, but these were in existence.

Particular mention should be made about Karaikkal Ammayar who had devoted her life for the cause of religion. In the circumstances when Tamil Nadu was terribly affected by the havoc that had been done by the

Kalabhras this saintly lady had contributed for the revival of Saivism and established herself as the harbinger of the *bhakti* movement.<sup>82</sup> Life of women who had gone in for a saintly life and devoted themselves for religion and public welfare are gleamed from the epic *Manimekhalai*. *Manimekhalai* had paved the way for prison reforms by transforming the prisoners through moral instructions and converting the prison cells into public welfare or charity centres. The women who worked in the temples were called Talippendugal<sup>83</sup> and they were living in separate streets.

The women who lost their husband had practiced strict widowhood and adopted a very austere life.<sup>84</sup> Some women who could not overcome the grief had put an end to their life. The practice of sati was in vogue. From the line "பூணனிந்த மார்பினையும் வளையினையும் உடைய மகளிர் போரில் உடன் மடிய இறந்தோர்" found in the *Chilappadikaram* it is known that there were women who scarified their life in the battlefield along with their husbands.

## Prostitution

Sangam literature provides ample evidences about the life of the prostitutes who were called as *Parathaiyar*. These *Parathaiyar* were classified as *Kadal Parathaiyar* (காதல் பரத்தையர்), *Cheri Parathaiyar* (சேரி பரத்தையர்) and *Podu Magalir* (போது மகளிர்) in the age of Sangam. When man's association with the prostitutes had crossed the limits and endangered the morale and character of the society a warning became essential. This age pinpointed prostitution as a social evil. *Tirukkural* had dealt about the evils of this practice in a separate chapter under the title *Varaivin magalir* (வரைவின் மகளிர்).

The literary evidences prove that in the age from AD 300 to AD 600 prostitution had become almost a profession. A difference is noted from the *Parathamai* of the Sangam age. The single aim of the prostitutes was extracting money from their customers and with this motive they had relationship with men. They had entertained men according to their (men's) monitory capacity and once the purpose is over they left these men.<sup>85</sup> These prostitutes are called as *Porul Vilaiyatti* (பொருள் விளையாட்டி). One can find a highly derogatory expression against the prostitutes in *Tirukkural*. While chiding this practice *Tirukkural* says that finding pleasure in the company of prostitute is just like a man trying to derive pleasure by hugging a dead corpse in a dark room. Thus says *Kural*

"பொருட் பெண்டர் பொய்ம்மை முயக்கம் இருப்பதறையில்  
ஏதில் பினாந்தழீஇ யற்று"

*Chilappadikaram* mentions that there were separate streets in Puhar where these prostitutes were living.

These prostitutes were highly talented in various types of work and were well versed in fine arts. They were good in preparing a particular kind of powder used for bathing by mixing different things of fragrance. They were good in the art of painting and had the knowledge of astrology. They were trained well in the art of make-up and beautified themselves to attract men. They were able to conduct themselves according to the time and situation.<sup>86</sup> With all these accomplishments the prostitutes were able to entertain men. Men had completely fallen for them and had given up all their riches and wealth. To this extent the prostitutes were able to keep the men under their spell.<sup>87</sup> Once their wealth was snatched the prostitutes left men. There were occasions where men were driven to poverty by losing their wealth to prostitution.

— சுப்பி விலையாட்டி —

These women were also found in different status. Among them the affluent lived in big mansions that were decorated according to their taste and imagination. The affluent section of the society had association with them.<sup>88</sup> These prostitutes beautified themselves and were loitering in the streets of Puhar to attract men. There were streets in Madurai where the rich and the poor prostitutes were living in separate streets.<sup>89</sup> Since the society was going by certain social norms the people had a moral fear to go against them. For example nobody was willing to openly marry a prostitute and accept her as a wife.

There were certain customs and practices among the prostitutes. The child born to a prostitute was ceremoniously named by the eldest member among them.<sup>90</sup> They would have entered this profession on various circumstances. But once they are involved in this profession. There was no chance of going out of it. If they attempted to go out of the profession they were punished. They had to carry seven bricks on their head and go around the place and were thrown out.<sup>91</sup> In this way they were insulted.

Madavi who is depicted as the most accomplished in dance in the *Chilappadikaram* was able to perform well on the stage and captivate the audience for which she won a garland and also the Talaikkol title from the king. She was made to stand as a decorative doll in the streets of Puhar and a public announcement was made that the highest bidder for the garland presented to Madavi could possess her. Kovalan owned her by paying 1008 *kalanjus* of gold. Here the 1000 *kalanjus* were given as prize and 8 *kalanjus* were given for the pleasure he had in her company.<sup>92</sup> Thus there was a very good opportunity of earning a good income through prostitution and hence the elder and experienced among them were in contact with the members of

the royal family and also the affluent section of the society. The society which honoured women by raising *Patnikottam* on one side had also enslaved her and used her as the object of pleasure. These two extreme natures of the society are revealed by *Chilappadikaram*. The prostitutes never had an opportunity to come out of that life and live like an ordinary woman. They never had the courage to do so and even that was not accepted by the society. But there were examples of women who abandoned the life of a prostitute and decided on a saintly life. Madavi and *Manimekhalai* are two such examples revealed by the twin epics *Chilappadikaram* and *Manimekhalai*.

## **Marriage**

During the age of Sangam, marriage was conducted on an auspicious day and time with the participation of elderly people. The era taken for study follows the age of Sangam and certain remarkable changes were found in the performance of marriage. Rituals became a part of the marriage ceremony which were different to the simple way in which marriage was conducted earlier.

The families of the bridegroom and the bride consulted with each other and after considering the family status the marriage was fixed. From the verses of *Chilappadikaram* it is understood that marriage was fixed on the auspicious day of the moon in union with the star *Rohini*. The marriage of Kovalan and Kannagi was announced with the sound of drums beaten by on elephant backs. It is significant to note here that the *purohita* played a vital role in the performance of the marriage. The rituals were according to Vedic scriptures and the bride and the bridegroom went around the sacred fire.<sup>93</sup> Aryan influences had eroded Tamil culture and found an expression in

many aspects of life. The people who had assembled to witness the marriage ceremony blessed the couple and showered flowers on them. *Arundadhi* who is identified as a star had been taken as example for chastity and purity.

*Chilappadikaram* refers to *mangala ani* (மங்கள அணி) which was taken in procession around the town on the occasion of marriage. This *mangala ani* should have been the family jewel that was passed on from generation to generation. It was not the *mangala sutra* or *tali* that is tied around the neck of the bride by the bridegroom. The custom of tying *tali* was not in practice during this age. It was not prevalent during the age of Sangam also. While describing her imaginary marriage with Krishna in the pasuram, "வாரணமாயிரம் சூழ வலம்வந்து நாரணன் நம்பி நடக்கின்றான்" in the Nachiar Tirumoli Andal had not mentioned the custom of tying *tali*. This practice should have come later. *Eimpadai tali* and *Pulippal tali* that are mentioned in the literature were worn by the children. According to *Chilappadikaram*, Kovalan was sixteen and Kannagi was twelve years of age when they were married. This indicates more or less the age fixed for marriage and the age difference between the girl and the boy.

## Family

Despite the dominant influence of Jain and Buddhist philosophical notions of the transience of life and detachment from worldly affairs a greater value was attached to the family life.

The love one bears for another person often finds an expression in the deeds

"மெல்விரல் சிவப்பப் பல்வேறு பசங்காய்  
கொடுவாய்க் குயத்து விடுவாய் செய்யத்  
திருமுகம் வியர்த்தது செங்கண் சேந்தன  
கரிபுற வட்டில் கண்டனள் பெயர  
வையெரி மூட்டிய வையை தன்னொடு  
கையறி மண்டையிற் காதலற்காக்கித்  
தாலப்புல்லின் வால்வென் டோட்டுக்  
கைவன் மகடுஉக் கவின்பெறப் புணர்த  
செப்பினைத் தவிசிற் செல்வனிந்தபின்  
கடிமல் ரங்கையிற் காதலனடி நீர்  
சுடுமண் மண்ணடயிற் ரெழுதனன் மாற்றி  
மண்ணக மடந்தையை மயக் கொழிப்பனள்போல்  
தண்ணீர் தெளித்துத் தன்னையாற் றடவிக்  
குமரி வாழையின் குருத்தகம் விரித்தீங்  
கழுத முண்க வடிக ரீங்கென"94

The above lines are a description of the way in which Kannagi cooked food for Kovalan and served him the cooked food. A similar expression is found in the act of the lady love of Kuruntogai<sup>95</sup> in the age of Sangam. After food men chewed betal leaf with nuts folded and given by wives, which was called 'Thakkolam'.

The practice of monogamy was not strictly adhered to in the society. There are instances where the second woman of her man was accepted by the wife to the extent of feeding the child that was born to that woman.<sup>96</sup>

In the upper strata of the society unusually there are two types of maternal relationship as *Narrai* (the real mother) and *sevilithai* (adopted mother). Sangam literature provides rich information on the relationship of the girl with the *sevilithai*. Usually the female children had grown under the care of adopted mothers in the affluent families.<sup>97</sup> This practice was continued in the age after Sangam also. There is a dearth of matter regarding the exact role of *Narrai* in such families.

## Dress

Literature of the period is replete with information about dress. There were weavers who made cloth with cotton thread, rat hair (ஏலி மூவிட்) and silk thread.<sup>98</sup> The cotton cloth that was woven by hundred count thread was popular.<sup>99</sup> Cloth weaving and using dye were very important occupations in which a number of people were involved.<sup>100</sup> Cotton and wool were the materials used for making garments. There were a group of merchants called Kambalachchetti who specialised in manufacturing woolen garments.<sup>101</sup>

Ordinary people wore clothes made out of cotton whereas the rich wore silk clothes. Those who wore clothes with the silk thread were called Pattusaliyar and in the city of Puhar there were separate streets where these people lived.<sup>102</sup> These different types of clothes were spread out in shops for sale.<sup>103</sup>

Both men and women wore dress around their waist. *Mekhalai* the ornament worn by women over the waist added beauty to the dress worn by them. Some men were in the habit of wearing an upper garment like the modern shirt which is referred to as chattai.<sup>104</sup> It was also called as Meippai.<sup>105</sup> The practice of women drawing *thoyyal* with the coloured liquid on their breasts continued after the age of Sangam. There were references about this practice in the literature of the age. This indicates that the women were not in the habit of wearing an upper garment. *Pudavai* was probably worn over the waist and it did not cover the breasts. It is significant to note here that the sculptures of the Pallava age which depicts the feminine beauty with elegance do not have an upper garment. This should have been common in those times. An artist and freelance writer D. Raphael had studied and photographed the sculptures of Kudandaikil kottam, an early Chola temple of Aditya I. His article on this temple with photographs is published.<sup>106</sup> The female figures identified by D. Raphael as princesses of royal family<sup>107</sup> do not have upper garments.

The workers who were involved in stitching the garments were called as '*Thunnakkarakar*' or *Thunnal Vinaignar*<sup>108</sup> (துன்னல் வினைஞர்). They are identified by their occupation of *thunnal* which means stitching.

### Make-up

Women in general took keen interest in beautifying themselves with different types of make-up materials. This habit is found in women all through the ages. Infact this had grown as an art in those times. The bathing water of the ladies of the affluent and royal families was scented with fragrant materials. These materials were used on the medical advice so that they may not affect the skin. After the bath the wet hair was exposed to the smoke of *Sambrani*. *Kandacharkarai* (கண்ட சுங்கரை) that was imported from the *Yavana* country was used to add fragrance to this smoke.<sup>109</sup> The women who had short hair used artificial.<sup>110</sup>

Women were in the habit of keeping different flowers like *Chengalunir*, *Kuvalai*, *Kittuppu*, *Talai* (தாழை), *Madarippu* and *Thamarai* on their hair. The flowers that were used in the morning were thrown out and fresh flowers were kept in the evening. Men also plaited their hair and kept flowers which is mentioned in *Chilappadikaram*

Women had the habit of applying eyetex or kajal.<sup>111</sup> *Chempanchukkulambu* was like modern *mehendi* and was applied on foot. Women had interest in make-up and were beautifying themselves according to the time and also the occasion.<sup>112</sup> Women took keen interest in dressing which was perfectly done and were in the habit of looking in the mirror which had a golden frame.<sup>113</sup>



## Ornaments

Both women and men wore different kinds of ornaments. Chudagam<sup>114</sup> which was designed well and studded with precious stone was an ornament worn on hand. *Sidevi*, *deivavutti*, *thooyyagam* or *thalaipalai* (தலைபாளை) *pullagam* or *thenpalli* (தென்பல்லி) and *vadappali* were the ornaments worn on head.<sup>115</sup> Tiru which is found in the line, "திருவண்ணந்த ஏண்ணுதல் மாதர்"<sup>116</sup> was again an ornament worn on head. *Magorakundalam*, *Padrakundalam*, *Chandrapani*, *Kadippinai* were worn on ears.<sup>117</sup>

Varieties of chains and necklaces were adorning the people. *Virachangili* was worn by men. Then different types of chains, *saradu*, *savadi* and *sarapalli*<sup>118</sup> were some of the neck ornaments. There was a particular type of ornament called *pintali* which was studded with pearls and precious stones and covered the back.<sup>119</sup>

*Tholvalai* made up of different kinds of beads was worn on shoulders.<sup>120</sup> *Kandigai* was worn on hands. Bangles were made out of champor with precious stones. *Sanku* bangles were popular.<sup>121</sup> There were different varieties of finger rings. Some of them were *magaravay modiram*, *peeli modiram*, *kan modiram* and *mudakku modiram*.<sup>122</sup>

*Muthuvadam* that was worn on waist was called as *muttarai*.<sup>123</sup> *Virisigai* was a kind of *mekhalai* worn by women over the *pudavai* and it had thirty two strings of pearls.<sup>124</sup> *Kuranguchcheri* was worn on thigh.<sup>125</sup> *Pariagam*, *Chadangai*, *Padakam* and *Padachalam* were worn on foot.<sup>126</sup>

Kannagi's *chilambu* was noted for its intricate workmanship and was made of a special kind of gold called *kilichchirai* and in the hollow space diamonds and *manikkams* were placed. *Nupuram* was worn on toes.<sup>127</sup> *Sathrupam*, *Kilichchirai*, *Adagam* and *Sambunatham* were the four qualities of gold used by the goldsmith to make ornaments.<sup>128</sup> *Kodippavalam* used was free of three evils.<sup>129</sup> *Paduman*, *Neelam*, *Vindam* and *Padidam* were four types of *manikkams* that were used in ornaments.<sup>130</sup> *Venmuthu*, *Chennira muthu* and *animuthu* were used.<sup>131</sup> *Pushparagam* was a precious stone that was looking like the eyes of the cat. Diamond used was devoid of four kinds of evil.<sup>132</sup> *Eimpadai tali* and *Pulippal tali* were worn by children for protection. Most of these ornaments cited by the literature of the period are found in the sculptures of the temples.

*Cherupu* that were highly decorative and stylish were used by the people.<sup>133</sup>

## Food

Just like ornaments food items were also found in varieties. It is interesting to note here that there was a book with cooking recipe called *Madainul*.<sup>134</sup> Cooking was also considered as an art and much care was taken for that also.

Rice was the main food of the Tamil people. There were varieties of rice and among them *Kandasali*<sup>135</sup> was considered as the best quality. *Immi* was the smallest size of paddy.<sup>136</sup> Milk and milk products, vegetables, fruits were the major items of food.<sup>137</sup> *Pittu* and *appam* were prepared and sold.<sup>138</sup> *Puzhukkal* (புழுக்கல்) which was made of *dhals* like *avarai* and *thuvarai* was offered as *nivedya* to gods.<sup>139</sup> The rice mixed with meat was called

*Vilukkumadai* and was a popular food.<sup>140</sup> *Ellurundai*<sup>141</sup> was another popular food item. *Puzhal*<sup>142</sup> which is mentioned in the line "பூழல் என்னும் பண்ணியெம் இட்ட கலனும்" was a *tiffen* item called *Sirrundi*.

*Toppi* was a liquor prepared with paddy as the major ingredient and was consumed by the workers in ships.<sup>143</sup> Liquor consumption was a common habit in those days but yet it was considered as an evil. There was an opinion that a drunkard could never be good in other aspects of his character. Fish and burnt meat called *chuttiraichchi* (குட்டிரைச்சி) were also included in the food varieties. Since Tamilagam was under the influence of Jain and Buddhist philosophies non-injury to living beings was much stressed. Hence killing a life for food was considered as sin.<sup>144</sup> The cow that gives milk was sacred and should not be killed. It can be particularly mentioned here that there is a reference in the Pallava copper plate that one who misappropriates the land endowed by the king would suffer a sin equivalent to killing a hundred thousand cows. The cooking place in the house was called *adukkalai*.<sup>145</sup>

### Medical Science

Much emphasis was laid on leaping a sound health. It was felt that food habits of the individual should suit one's own body condition. It was felt that food should be a balanced diet free from unwanted ingredients. When the food is tasty the people are succumbed to over eating which may disturb the body constitution. Such thoughts on food habits are found in the period. *Tirukkural* makes a note with caution that unhealthy food habits and wrong ways of eating food were the cause for most of the physical problems.<sup>146</sup>

There were physicians whom the people approached when they were sick. *Tirukkural* has a chapter on medicine which gives in a nutshell the different aspects of medical science.<sup>147</sup> and is relevant for any age. There are references in the *Kilkkanakku* literature about the existence of ophthalmology as a science.<sup>148</sup> There are also references about diseases like mouth cancer, tuberculosis and piles.<sup>149</sup>

### **Beliefs, Customs and Traditions**

Customs and beliefs that are followed by the people generation after generation are absorbed by the society and later on became traditions. These customs and beliefs had outgrown man's rational thinking and power of reasoning and had played a dominant role in the life of the people.

It is customary among people to begin a work on an auspicious day and on an auspicious time by noting the union of *varam*, *didi* and start. On understanding the effect of the union of stars *muzhuttam* that is the auspicious time for an occasion like marriage was fixed.<sup>150</sup> One *muzhuttam* (முழுத்தம்) was measured as  $3\frac{3}{4}$  *naligai* of time.<sup>151</sup> *Muzhuttam* became *muhurtam* later on. The people had unshakable belief in astrology. There was a *kurinul*<sup>152</sup> which was about astrology. The position of planets and the twelve stars, *didi*, *varam* (day), *yogam* and *karanam* were the five *angas* of the *jyotisha sastra*. One who was well versed in *jyotisha* was called as *Nimittakkarakar* and he was consulted by the people who had faith in it. *Rohini* was considered as an auspicious star by the Tamil people. The day moon was in union with *Rohini* was considered as a lucky day<sup>153</sup> for conducting marriage.

The sound made by the Kari bird was taken as a bad omen by the *Marava* community while going on hunting.<sup>154</sup> This belief was called *Pulnimittam* (புள் நமித்தம்) which exists even today. It was considered as an evil to go in between two gods or two brahmins.<sup>155</sup>

If somebody sniffed while starting a journey it was taken as a bad omen and the journey was delayed. If a friend came on the way or an elderly person offered his blessings then the journey was proceeded. These are practiced even today. An example for such an event can be seen in the *Kamattuppal* of *Tirukkural*.

"வாழ்த்தினாள் தும்மினே னாக அழித்தமுதாள்  
யாருள்ளித் தும்மினீர் என்று"

When a woman was enjoying the delightful company of her man, he happened to sniff. Since sniffing was a bad omen she reacted immediately and blessed him. Then with a suspicious note she chided him for thinking about some other woman which was the cause for sniffing.<sup>156</sup>

It was wrong to call a person when he is about to start a journey. In the same way it was considered inauspicious to ask him where he was going.<sup>157</sup>

People believed in fate. This belief was found not only in Tamil Nadu but in general everywhere in India.

It was not good to sleep in the day time in places like a dilapidated house or temple, grave yards, deserted places, devoid of people and under old trees.<sup>158</sup> Since sleeping in such places was risky and may expose to fear of life such beliefs were existing.

Certain practices like placing the *nali* invertedly on the *manai* (மனை) a wooden plank that served as seat to do *puja*, spreading out a new cloth at the entrance door of the house, laying the cot at the entrance door and standing before a stranger were not good for the house.<sup>159</sup>

*Chadukkabutam* which was placed at the junction of four streets guarded the good people and severely punished the evil doers.<sup>160</sup> This was a very popular belief of the people in those days. The evil doers were beaten to death by this *Chadukkabutam* and it swallowed the person. Since there were no codified laws in those days such beliefs were necessary to discipline the people and save them from wicked deeds.

There was a group in the society who were good in magic spells and made the people to believe them. The people believed that certain chronic diseases could be cured through such magic spells. Such magic spells were practiced to get over fear and to get rid of evils.<sup>161</sup>

Sometimes the milk in the pot may get spoilt while boiling or butter may not melt. These were considered as bad omen by the Idaiyar community. They feared misfortune in life when cattle suffered with diseases or the bell tied around the neck of the cattle fell.<sup>162</sup> When a bull crossed while going on a journey it was taken as a bad omen. This happened to Kovalan when he took leave of Kannagi to sell the *chilambu*. This had been mentioned as a bad omen in *Chilappadikaram* which ultimately led to the tragic death of Kovalan. When such events occurred incidentally the belief of the people became deep rooted.

Cleaning the teeth with the stick of banyan or neem trees and washing the eyes with water were the regular habits of the people. There is a saying in Tamil, "அலூம் வெலும் பல்லுக்குறுதி". They prayed to god and started the day's work.<sup>163</sup>

The people had a fear about the evil spirits whose abode were trees. It was generally believed that evil spirits were residing on trees in big groups. So generally people never went near the trees at odd hours. These evil spirits were driven off by throwing *Vembu* and *Kadugu* which were believed to be a *nausia* for evil spirits. This act was called *Kadippagai*. Then they showed *dupam* (smoke of *sambrani* or camphor) to get rid of the evil spirits.<sup>164</sup> Dreams that may represent unpleasing or evil incidents were considered as bad omen.

A delicious and sumptuous meal was called *perumchoru*. *Perumchoru* was offered by the king to his soldiers before conducting war to imbibe the spirit of enthusiasm in them. This practice which existed in the age of Sangam continued in the post-Sangam era which is known through Chilappadikaram.<sup>165</sup> Such good meals were offered on the occasion of marriage, festivals, *yagas* and death ceremonies.

Certain habits like pointing out the finger before the elders while talking and writing on toes before elders were not agreeable since they were a mark of disrespect.<sup>166</sup> In the same way when elderly people give some article one should have the courtesy to stand and receive it with both hands.<sup>167</sup>

It was not a healthy habit to lie down and sleep at odd times. While sleeping the head was not placed on the north or minor directions.<sup>168</sup>

It was believed that grass, cultivable land, cowdung, the footpaths leading to grave yards, water resources and ashes should not be dirtied.<sup>169</sup> The people were conscious of pollution.

The practices like spitting on the wall, wearing other people's dress, walking close to others to the extent that the air from the dress is transferred to the other persons' dress, adjusting the dress in front of others were not considered as healthy practices. In the same way one should not wash his mouth while standing in water.<sup>170</sup> Such habits may generate infectious germs.

It should be particularly mentioned here that literature supplies certain recipes for marital relationship. During the period of menstruation the husband was not supposed to see the wife for three days. After she had the bath he should not be away from her for twelve days.<sup>171</sup> These facts have a scientific basis and had been followed in those days.

### **Education**

Education was given prime importance and the Tamil society had never failed to respect and honour the learned. The lofty ideas and thoughts of the learned and their practices had embellished the nature and character of the Tamil society. Nothing was considered equal to wisdom. This contributed for the rise of refined thoughts and ideas of the age. (பிச்சை புகினுங் கற்கை நன்றெ) So even at the stage of one getting reduced to penury learning was excellent and it can support him. *Kilkkanakku* literature stores very rich ideas about the importance of education, the value of education, the nature of teachers, the method of teaching, curriculum, the duties of the students, their conduct, the materials provided for students and such other details.

In the Sangam literature education is sighted as one of the reasons for a man to leave his wife and family. The other two reasons were to earn wealth and to go as the messenger of the king. So education was given importance to this extent in those times.

Mathematics, letters (எழுத்து) and grammar were the main subjects taught to the students.<sup>172</sup> The teacher who taught *Nedunkanakku* (mathematics) was called as Kanakkayar.<sup>173</sup>

The teacher was expected to educate the child and develop his personality. He should inculcate moral values in students. The teacher himself should maintain moral standards and be a role model for students. A good teacher always commanded the respect of the students. The institution of a teacher who exposes his anger and wrath towards a student would be a waste since nobody would be willing to learn under him.<sup>174</sup> The term *palli* (பள்ளி) is associated with educational institutions.

Students in those days had a tuft of hair. He usually had a head bath once in a month. The duties of the student were patiently hearing the teacher, reciting what ever was taught by the teacher and offering his salutation to the teacher.<sup>175</sup>

Learning in those days was mostly oral and was less writing.

The students who were learning had enjoyed certain facilities. They were offered food, clothing and learning materials like books and *eluttani* (எழுத்தாணி).<sup>176</sup> The people who had lived between AD 300 and AD 600 were the forerunners to the people of a later age. The epigraphs found in the temples of Ennayiram, Tirumukkudal and Tirubhuvanai details about the

existence of the Vedic colleges attached to these temples. The students who studied Vedas in these colleges were under two different grades as we have bachelors degree and masters degree today. The students were the beneficiaries of various facilities that included stipends. Teachers were given handsome remuneration. It is noteworthy to mention here that the facts found in the epigraphs are the continuation of a work done in the by-gone age.

The word *puttagam*<sup>177</sup> is found in the literature and it denotes the habit of reading which was in vogue among the learned section of the society.

A good pupil should be entirely devoted to the teacher and should render perfect obedience to the teacher.<sup>178</sup>

At the end of the study before bidding adieu to the teacher the student made offering as the token of affection to the teacher. This was called *Gurudakshina*.

Even in those times teachers had defects. The knowledge of some of the teachers was highly superfluous. They by-hearted the learning materials and recited whatever they knew in the class without understanding the meaning. These teachers posed themselves as proficient in learning. In this way these teachers were exposing their ignorance.<sup>179</sup> A student could not learn anything from such a teacher and like his own teacher he might have exposed only his ignorance amidst a learned assembly.

Chintadevi was the goddess of learning and was worshipped by the people. The temple of Chintadevi was called as '*Kalai Niyamam*'. *Manimekhalai* refers to this temple as *Chintadevi Chezhunkalai Niyamattu*'.<sup>180</sup>

## Ghatikas of Kancheepuram

The *Ghatikas* of Kancheepuram played a dominant role in making the city a cultural centre in the south. *Ghatika* came from the root *ghat* which means in Sanskrit to strive after and it has been understood as an institution where scholars thronged for higher knowledge. The earliest epigraphical reference about the *Ghatika* of Kancheepuram is made in the Talagunda inscription of Kakusthavarman, the Kadamba king. According to the inscription Mayurasarman the ancestor of the Kadamba king Kakusthavarman had travelled a long way and reached the *Ghatika* of Kancheepuram with his preceptor Virasarman to learn. Here he had an encounter with the Pallava soldiers who were guarding the place and he was able to win.<sup>181</sup> It is evident from this incident that the Ghatikas as centres of learning had attracted many people.

Education in those days included not only mathematics, grammar and writing but also fine arts like music, dance, painting and sculpturing and sciences like agriculture technology, zoology, botany and medicine. Other studies like astronomy, astrology and even mantras and *tantras* were apart of education. *Madurai Kanchi* the Sangam work has reference about a work on government and administration. It is known through the line "நூலறி புலவர் நுண்ணிதிற் கயிறிட்டு" from *Nedunalvadai* that there was a work associated with architecture. The literature of the period reveals about the existence of *Chirppachchennul*<sup>182</sup> (architecture), *Oviyachchennul*<sup>183</sup> (painting), *Kalappainul*<sup>184</sup> (agriculture), *Natiyananul*<sup>185</sup> (dance), *Madaimul*<sup>186</sup> (cooking), *Maruthuvanul*<sup>187</sup> (medicine) and *Kurinul*<sup>188</sup> (astrology).

Literature of the period also has references on the habits of birds, animals and insects<sup>189</sup> and also plant studies.<sup>190</sup>

Much is not known about education of women in this period. Karaikkal Ammayar shines as the lady of profound learning and had taken up the cause of religion. Since Charudevi the queen of Buddhavarman was involved in the public affairs it can be inferred that she should have been well versed in learning. *Manimekhalai* who is depicted as the exponent of the Buddhist philosophy was well versed in different religious scriptures. Her scholastic learning and the spirit of enquiry had made her to discuss and argue with our religious sects.

Study of Vedas was given utmost importance in the period between AD 300 and AD 600. The Vedic influences were found in the various aspects of social life. For example *purohita*'s role in marriage. Most of the land grants were made by the Pallava kings to the brahmins who were proficient in Chaturvedas.

It is significant to note here that education was more secular in the age. Technology was also a part of education during the period.

*Tirukkural* has devoted a chapter that explains about the evils that may befall the society if education and the learned are neglected.

## ECONOMY

Economics is basically a science of wealth. The necessity of accumulating wealth, the methods of earning wealth, the ways of utilising the wealth are brought under certain norms and conceptualised as economics. The Kilkkanakku throws much light on the economic aspects of the life of the people between AD 300 and 600.

Tirukkural says,

அருளிஸ்வார்க்கு அவ்வுலகம் இல்லை பொருளிஸ்வார்க்கு  
இவ்வுலகம் இல்லாங்கி யாங்கு

According to the above Tirukkural one who does not have money cannot own this world just like one who does not have the grace of God cannot own the other world (heaven). This brings in a nut shell the importance of possessing wealth. Tirukkural conveys a lot of ideas about the utility value of wealth and also at the same time it talks about the economic inequalities created by wealth in the society.

Individual prosperity and also the resourcefulness of the state depends on wealth. Hence there should be planned spending to overcome the problem of scarcity. This was much emphasised in this period. If there is no planned economy the state as well as the individual would have to suffer poverty. Wealth represents the material means of satisfying human wants and consequently of promoting human welfare. All these thoughts are conceptualised in the *Porul adikaram* of Tirukkural. Tirukkural says in the forty eighth chapter

ஆற்றின் அளவறிந்து ஈக அது பொருள்  
போற்றி வழங்கும் நெறி (Kural 479)

ஆங்காறு அளவிட்டிதாயினுங் கேடில்லை  
போகாறு அகலாக் கடை (Kural 480)

அளவறிந்து வாழாதான் வாழ்க்கை உள்போல  
இல்லாகித் தோன்றாக் கெடும் (Kural 481)

உளவரை தூக்காத ஒப்புரவாண்மை  
வளவரை வல்லைக் கெடும் (Kural 481)

As the society grew larger the concept of state came into existence. Economics also crossed the narrow frontiers of individual and family and became the prime activity of the state. In this background thoughts like political economy and social economy had come into existence.

In those days the kings and the affluent section of the society considered much the welfare of the people and utilised the wealth for public welfare. In this way they contributed for the economic development of the state. From the line, "துகள் தீர்ப் பெருஞ்செல்வம்"<sup>191</sup> it is understood that wealth should be earned through the righteous way and only such income would have a permanent value. In those days wealth was used for feeding people and also to alleviate the problems of friends and relatives.<sup>192</sup> Wealth was used in an economic manner to help the people according to their needs. The wealthy people earned a name and fame and also enjoyed prestige and power in the society.<sup>193</sup> It was felt that only a resourceful nation could emerge powerful and attain glory.

Tirukkural says,

நாடென்ப நாடா வளத்தன நாடல்ல  
நாட வளந்தரு நாடு (Kural 739)

Hence those who governed the country utilised the resources of the country in a constructive way and earned the good will of the society.

In those days status of the individual was measured in terms of the land and cattle possessed by him since they were wealth. Many of the inscriptions found in the temples of Tamil Nadu contain the details about the gift of lands and cattle made by the kings and individuals. The oil extracted from the gingelly seeds, the cloth made out of cotton, shawl, food and money were offered as gift in those days.<sup>194</sup> The gifts should be made to the needy and such people were those who had lost the dwelling place and those who had lost cattle and wealth.<sup>195</sup> The affluent section of the society took interest in public welfare. They took responsibilities like improving water resources by digging wells and excavating tanks. They took interest in constructing mantapas, making shelters called Ilaikudil and supplying drinking water by erecting thaneer pandal for the comfort of the travellers. Some of the wealthy people had taken it as a principle to spend a quarter of their income for charity purpose.<sup>196</sup> The affluent section of the society took it as their obligation to indulge in welfare activities. In those times the people did not have the attitude that government alone was responsible for public welfare. Individuals especially business community voluntarily involved in the activities for the betterment of the society. The king and the individuals were involved in social welfare which came from within. Hence whatever they created was permanent and enduring.

The wealth that was earned should be spent according to the individual's capacity to spend. Otherwise one may lose his wealth. Though the wealth earned may be limited there should be a planned spending. Income and expenditure should strike a balance, so that the state may not suffer due to shortage of funds. These thoughts found in the Kilkkanakku literature may suit any age for economic planning.<sup>197</sup>

Wealth provides security in life. Hence one should save wealth atleast for the sake of avoiding dependency in future. Though there was no banking system in those days as we find now the people had the habit of saving income for their use at the old age.<sup>198</sup> There was anxieties about future and saving gave a sort of confidence and a sense of security of life in future. The fear that the income saved may be robbed resulted in the practice of digging holes and burying money in a secret place.<sup>199</sup> Sometimes the wealth was buried in this way when people especially the business group went on a long journey and took years to return. The money saved was called *Vaippu Nidi* (வைப்பு நிதி). Most of the ancient coins were discovered from such burial places.

## Agriculture

Agriculture was the backbone of economy and the agriculturists were able to win the high regard of the king and the people.

"வரப்புயர நீர் உயரும்  
நீருயர நெல் உயரும்  
நெல்லுயர குடி உயரும்  
குடியுயர கோன் உயரும்"

From the above lines which are popularly known in Tamilagam it is understood that when agriculture flourished the people could live in prosperity and happiness and in turn the king could also rise up in power and prestige. The Velalars contributed for the resourcefulness of the state and it resulted in the success of the government under monarchy. The Velalas saved the honour of the king who was seated under the umbrella. Hence the cultivating class was considered as the pet children of the river Kaviri which fed the agricultural lands.

The author of the Chilappadikaram begins the epic by invoking the river Kaviri and rain.

"காவிரி நாடன் நிகிரிபோற் பொற்கோட்டு  
மேரு வலந்திரித லான்  
மாமழை போற்றுது மாமழை போற்றுதும்  
நாமநீர் வேலி யுலகிற் கவனளிபோல்  
மேனின்று தான் சுரத்தலான்."

According to the description found in the Pallankoil copper plates the Chola king wore Kaviri, the daughter of Kadalon (கடலோன்) as a garland. The ever green paddy fields and sugar cane fields had the look of a colourful dress of the king. Kamugu and the banana gardens served as the Odyana of the Chola king.

It was felt that if agricultural operations failed even the *rishis* and saints who had relinquished the worldly life cannot survive.<sup>200</sup>

The whole land ruled by the king was his own property and the king had the right to dispose them in any way that he was pleased. But still the king had the personal property of his own. The Pallava king Kumaravishnu II was owning a private property of eight hundred *pattika* of land in the Chendarur grama in Kavachakara bhoga in Kamma rashstra. From this four hundred and thirty and two *pattika* of land was endowed by the king as brahmadeya to Bhavaskandadradan of Pullur. This information is found in the Chendarur copper plates.

Inscriptions of the period refer to terms like *Karanmai* and *Miyatchi*. These terms are associated with the rights on land. *Karanmai* was the right of cultivating the land and *miyatchi* was the supreme right of enjoying the resources of land without restrictions or right to ownership.<sup>201</sup> Hence the

people associated with lands were either the proprietors of the soil or the cultivators. The proprietors of the land either carried on the cultivation work by themselves or the land was given in lease. Since Tirukkural mentions about the owners of land who did not even care to visit their land holdings and witness the agricultural operations in person, it is understood that there was absentee landlordism in that age also.

### **Devadana, Brahmadeya and Pallichanda**

While discussing about the rights on land it should be particularly mentioned here about the existence of *Devadana*, *Brahmadeya* and *Pallichanda* lands. These lands were gifted by the king to temples, brahmins and Jains respectively. Among the fifteen copper plates issued by the Pallava kings of this period from AD 300 to 600 eleven were granted as *brahmadeya*. This makes it explicit that *brahmadeya* lands were increasing in number and *brahmadeya* rights were extending over a large area. The *brahmadeya* land was gifted either to a single individual brahmin or a number of brahmins. The land mentioned in the Mangalore copper plates was given to eight brahmins. The land mentioned in Hirahadahalli copper plates was shared by twenty five brahmins. This number had increased to a very large extent in the later period. The land referred to in the Pattatalmangalam copper plate of Nandivarman II was donated to 108 brahmins. The names and the *gotra* of the brahmins are found in the copper plate. The land referred to in the Tandanthottam grant of Nandivarman II was endowed to 308 brahmins and the copper plates gives a list of 214 names. All these records show that *brahmadeya* rights have increased and brahmins became an influential group in the society. Later on it is found that the assembly of the village under *brahmadeya* was called as *sabha* and it became an elected body for which evidence is found in the inscription of Vaikuntaperumal temple at Uttaramerur.

The lands that was endowed as *brahmadeya* or *devadana* or *pallichanda* were mostly made as tax-free. From the Chendarur inscription it is understood that nearly eighteen kinds of exemptions were given when the land was endowed. The donee need not supply food, water, fire wood, cot, residential place for royal officials. They need not give milk and curd. In the land endowed they need not dig the earth for salt or draw toddy. They need not supply bull to carry articles or grass. These eighteen exemptions were given after setting aside the land that might have been already given.<sup>202</sup> This is mentioned in the copper plates as *devaboga ulavu nikki*.

The Pallava copper plates give very rich information about rivers, tanks, lakes, wells, pathways and gardens that were existing in lands that were given as endowments. The boundaries of the endowed lands were fixed by placing stones or growing some plants mentioned in the inscriptions as "கல்லும் கள்ளியும் நாட்டி". The Sanskrit word *kshetra* referred to land.<sup>203</sup> Most of the grants were donated with the performance of rites called '*nirodu attikkoduttal*' (நீரோடு அட்டிக் கொடுத்தல்) which established the right of the donee and the king passed the orders directly to the officials. The royal officials who executed the grant, the writer of the grant, the forefathers of the donee, their relatives and such other details are found in the inscriptions. The Pallava copper plates which had given all the details about the donated land would have served the purpose of a well documented government record in that period.

Simhavarman the father of Simhavishnu the Pallava ruler endowed lands at Amancherkai in Perunagar nadu in Venkundrakottam to a Jain scholar Vajranandi as *pallichandam* in recognition of his profound learning and scholarship. The lands granted were situated in two villages. One was

Amancherkai in Venkundrakottam and another was  $16\frac{1}{2}$  *pattikas* of land in the village Damar in Kancheepuram.

The copper plate narrates as, "நீர் நிலமும், புன்செயும், களரும், கன்று மேய் பாழும், காடும், பீடவிளகையும், கிடங்கும், கேணியும், மனையும், மனைப் படப்பும் உடும்போடி ஆகை தவழ்ந்தது எல்லாம் உண்ணிலன் ஒழிவின்றி கோவும் பொறியும் மாற்றி".

From the above portion of the Pallankoil inscription it is understood that everything in the land including the waste lands and even reptiles like *guanas* and turtles were included in the grant. The land rights that were existing before and documents concerning them were rewritten. The copper plates mention certain tanks and wells like *Yendaleri*, *Velvadugan eri* and *Murkkangeni*.

Among the fifteen copper plates of the Pallavas available from the period AD 300 to 600 thirteen were made as tax free. In that eight were made after setting aside *devadana* lands which is mentioned as *devaboga ulavu nikki*. The grants that were already made were also set aside when an endowment was made.

When lands were donated in this way exempting from taxes a doubt arises that it may bring down the income of the state. This loss was compensated by generating income through other sources like custom duties, professional taxes and the booty from wars.

In the modern period Tamil Nadu has established agricultural colleges where the science of agriculture is taught to students. Though such colleges were not existing in those days it is astonishing to note that there was a book on the science of agriculture called *Kalappainul* which had all details about

the scientific method of agriculture and manuring.<sup>204</sup> Much importance was given to cattle rearing and protecting them. The hay in the land were collected and then the lands were brought under plough. The waste lands were reclaimed and by proper methods of manuring were converted into alluvial soil. All these facts find a place in the Kalappainul. The lands should be ploughed to the extent of one *palam* (a measure) of dust and wastes should get reduced to  $\frac{1}{4}$  *palam*.<sup>205</sup>

### Irrigation

In Tamilagam agriculture depends on rainfall. When there was a monsoon failure cultivation suffered seriously. Hence it is imperative that other means of irrigation should be adopted to prevent crop failure.

River was the main source of irrigation. Kaviri with its tributaries and the channels and riverlets that are branching out of the river was able to supply water for a large tracts of land in the river basins. In this way river Kaviri which flows from Kudaku into the Chola country contributed for the fertility of the soil in that region.<sup>206</sup>

The springs, water falls, tanks, lakes and wells were the other sources of irrigation.<sup>207</sup> The water from the well was taken out with the help of some mechanical device and was used to irrigate the fields. Through such mechanical operations the flow of water was adjusted to avoid wastage.<sup>208</sup>

The Pallava kings had built big tanks to promote irrigation. The Pallava copper plates and inscriptions mention various tanks excavated and maintained by the Pallava kings. Charudevi the queen of Buddhavarman had endowed land to the Narayana temple at Dalura as devadana. This endowed

land was situated near a big tank Rajatataka and it facilitated the irrigation of the donated land.<sup>209</sup> Following this the Pallava kings had excavated many tanks for the purpose of irrigation. Kancheepuram was frequently affected by drought and the Pallava kings concentrated mainly on improving the irrigation facilities in this area.

Water from rivers and wells were distributed through canals to the inlands. This was carried out under the orders of the king. If an individual wanted to dig a canal he had to take the prior permission of the king.<sup>210</sup> Those who received land grants from the king had the right to dig canals. All these rights associated with the lands were given to the donee when the grant was made.

The rivers in the areas of Kancheepuram and Chinglepet which were under the direct rule of the Pallavas were often dry. Hence there was a need to promote irrigation in these areas. A committee called '*Eri Variyam*' was created by the Pallava king to look into the matters like protection of different sources of irrigation and also promotion of irrigation facilities.

In this way agricultural operations were carried on methodically and the crops were protected well. After the harvest was over the matured crop was beaten and the fallen grains were heaped and were measured.<sup>211</sup>

### Crops

The lands were usually graded as *nanjai*, *punjai* and the fallow lands. *Nanjai* was fertile alluvial soil and mostly rice and sugar cane were cultivated in this soil. Vegetables, green leafy vegetables, flowers were also *nanjai* crops.<sup>212</sup> Sugarcane was a cash crop and manufacture of sugar was

almost an industry even in those times. Sugarcane was fed in machines and the juice was extracted and sugar was produced.<sup>213</sup> Tapioca, turmeric, ginger, millets, garlic, banana, coconut, jackfruit were other agricultural products cultivated or grown.<sup>214</sup> *Sindurakkatti, kasturi* which have fragrance and other products like intoxicants honey, cardamom, pepper and root vegetables were grown in the hilly region.<sup>215</sup> Trees like teak, bamboo, *omai* were found in the forest.<sup>216</sup> A kind of paddy called *Eivanam* or *malainel* was cultivated in the hilly region.<sup>217</sup>

People joined the king in public welfare activities like increasing water resources by digging lakes and wells. Digging and maintaining wells, removing unwanted and obstructive trees to create a pathway for public, converting the fallow land into a cultivable land and raising the banks of the rivers for irrigation were considered as charitable acts of social value not only by the king but also by the affluent section of the society.<sup>218</sup> Though such efforts were taken by the king and the individuals there were drought conditions in certain areas.<sup>219</sup>

The cultivators were living in separate colonies in Puhar.

### Cattle

Next to the land the cattle which lived by eating the grass in the grazing land and gave milk was considered as a great wealth. Much care was taken to protect cattle. Dairy farming was an important aspect of the economy since milk and milk products were very important food items consumed by the people. Since *maadu* (cattle) was considered as wealth this word was used to mean wealth.<sup>220</sup>

Tirukkural says,

கேடில் விழுச் செல்வம் கல்வி ஒருவற்கு  
மாடல்ல மற்றையவை. (Kural 400)

Usually the Idaiyar community never milked a cow that had lost its calf.<sup>221</sup> The practice of sacrificing cows at the time of the performance of *yaga* by brahmins was rejected.<sup>222</sup>

### Weavers

Since the people were wearing a variety of clothes, weaving was another important occupation which involved a lot of people and gave them an income. Cotton weaving was the main occupation. Sericulture that is producing silk was also carried out by a group of weavers.<sup>223</sup> Chilappadikaram refers to Pattusaliyar who were silk weavers and there were separate streets where they were residing.

### Business community and trade

Trade both inland and foreign had flourished well during the age of Sangam. This is evident from the foreign coins that were discovered in Tamilagam. Sangam literature has reference about the ships that were importing horses from Arabia were loaded with different products of Tamil Nadu and were sent back to Arabia. This was continuing in the age after Sangam and trade contact of Tamil Nadu had further developed.

The character of the business community is revealed by Tirukkural in the following couplet.

வாணிகஞ் செய்வார்க்கு வாணிகம் பேணிப்  
பிறவும் தம்போற் செயின் (Kural 120)

According to the above kural the business man should have the capacity to protect and enhance his own trade and at the same time he should also respect and value the business of others.

This sort of a mutual recognition found among the business community led to the progress of their profession and they were spending a lot of money for public welfare. There were among business men who were philanthropist in attitude and contributed for the well being of the downtrodden section of the society in their individual capacity. Since the business community concentrated well on their trade such benevolence reaped by the society through them were steady.

The cargo ships which carried different articles of trade sailed in different directions. The Kandasarkarai which added fragrance to the bathing powder prepared by the ladies came from the *Yavana* country.<sup>224</sup> Not only goods but also skilled artists and workers were imported from the foreign countries. Such skilled people who came from Maratta, Maghada, Avanti and *Yavana* country worked in collaboration with the expertise in Tamil Nadu and created wonders in work of arts.<sup>225</sup>

Duties were levied on the imported goods by the officials of the custom house.<sup>226</sup> The business groups from overseas were residing in colonies of *Yavanas* in Puhar. There were *Pandagasalais* (godowns) which stored the merchandise and they were well guarded.<sup>227</sup>

There were big shops in the streets of big cities like Puhar, Vanchi, Madurai and Kanchi and a variety of articles from pins to precious stones were spread out for sale that was a very colourful sight. Due to business activities the streets of these cities were noisy and wore a busy look.

The town planning of the city of Puhar itself was more or less based on the business activities of the place. The coastal region of Puhar was called Pattinappakkam and the interior part of the city was Maruvurpakkam. In between these two regions of the city, *Nalangadi*, the day time market and *Allangadi*, the evening time market were found. The cargoes from the ships were received by the merchants in Pattinappakkam. These goods were bought by the smaller retail merchants and were sold in the *Nalangadi* and *Allangadi*. This procedure was adopted only for the goods that were entering into the harbour in the coastal regions of Puhar.

Chilappadikaram gives an interesting information about the way in which the shops were erected in the market. The trunk portion of the trees served the purpose of pillars and with their support the shops were raised.<sup>228</sup> Such a street was called *Pidigai theru*. The business in these shops started even before the dawn.

Chilappadikaram identifies a number of merchant groups and small traders. They were traders who were selling the colours used for *thoyyal*, those selling white washing materials, flower sellers, pattusaliyar dealing with silk, those who sold food items like *pittu* and *appam*, *valaichiyan* who sold intoxicants, parathavas who sold fish, umanar and umattiyar who sold white salt, betal leaf, sellers those who made rope, oil merchants and those who prepared and sold Panchayasan.<sup>229</sup> Among these merchant groups some were living in separate streets.

Through the Pallava copper plates it is understood that manufacture of salt was monopolised by the government. According to Bueler the term Alonakulachobam found in the Hirahadahalli plate means that to get rid of

the problem associated with salt.<sup>230</sup> Bueler had carefully examined this term and situation and considers that manufacture of salt was the right of the state in those days.<sup>231</sup> But from the literature of the period it is understood that private individuals were also involved in the manufacture of salt. If the interpretation of Bueler for Alonakulachobam as "to get rid of the problem associated with salt" is taken into consideration it can be assumed that some fraudulent practices were adopted in the manufacture of salt. Arthashastra emphasises that individuals should acquire the permission of the government for manufacturing salt. The term Uppukkocheigai found in the later Pallava inscriptions makes it crystal clear that the manufacture of salt was the monopoly of the state.<sup>232</sup>

There were people who had high power technical skill which was applied in increasing the production of commodity manufactured by them. In the iron workshops various types of instruments were made and repair work was also undertaken.<sup>233</sup> From the line '*'poriman punaitinder'*' (பாறிமான் புனைதின்டெர்) it is known that there were chariots which moved through some mechanical device.<sup>234</sup> The Kammalars or artisans were proficient in the metal work and wood work. Apart from these people the literature mentions Kuyavar or potters, those who made vessels out of alloy metals and goldsmiths.<sup>235</sup>

There were occupations that were associated with arts and highly skilled sculptors and craftsmen who could make figures out of stucco. They mostly concentrated in making the figures of gods and goddesses which were easily saleable. Leather workers were able to make money since they were making so many articles of daily necessity. The tailors were able to show their skill not only in stitching but also designing the cloth with thread.<sup>236</sup>

In enhancing the resources of the state and utilising them in a productive way the government and the private individuals took keen interest. The big business community also used a part of their income for charitable purposes. The maxim of welfare state which is a popular concept at present time was found even in those days. This thought was behind the popular *Indiravizha* (இந்திர விழா) celebrated in Puhar. The festival was celebrated for the progress of the country and the well being of the people. This is expressed in Manimekhalai as

"பசியும் பிணியும் பகையும் நீங்கி  
வசியும் வளனுஞ் சரக்கென வாழ்த்தி  
அணிவிழா அறைந்தனன் அகநகர் மருங்கென்."<sup>237</sup>

Wealth, resources, a happy and peaceful life free from ailments and diseases and a good system of security were considered to be the chief essentialities for a good state. Though such concepts and lofty thoughts were existing there were people who were living below poverty line under very poor living conditions.

## Measures

Different kinds of measures used for different purposes are found in the literature and Pallava copper plates. The copper plates of the Pallavas in Prakrit and Sanskrit mention certain land measurements like *yer*, *nivartana* and *pattika*.<sup>238</sup> Among these *yer* was the land that the farmer cultivated with the plough and two oxen within a stipulated time. The term Halasathahasra found in the Hirahadahalli plates means as one hundred and thousand *yer* and hence it is understood that *yer* was referred as a measurement of land. But the explanation of this measurement is very vague. *Nivartana* and *pattika* were also land measurements. Pallava copper plates do not give any clear idea bout these measurements. *Veli* and *kuli* were also land measurements.

The practice of fencing the land owned should have led to the people using the word *veli* as land measurement.<sup>240</sup> *Kuli* as a land measurement existed in various sizes from 144 sft to 576 sft. *Kol* was also a land measurement which was existing in different size like *Naluchan kol*, *Palnniruchan kol* and *Padinaruchan kol*.<sup>241</sup> Chilappadikaram mentions about a kol that went up to the length of keeping fingers twenty four times<sup>242</sup> as it is done for *mulam*.

*Nali*, *marakkal*, *kurini*, *padakku*, *kadi kalam* were used for measuring grains. *Padi* and *nali* were measurements with different sizes.<sup>243</sup> *Kalam* was made out of wood.

1 nali	=	$\frac{1}{4}$ padi
8 alakku	=	1 padi
8 padi	=	1 marakkal
12 marakkal	=	1 kalam

*Alakku*, *uri*, *olakku*, *nali* were used for measuring ghee and oil.<sup>244</sup> *Pidi* and *chodu* were the measures mostly used for milk, curd, ghee and oil and were in very small size.<sup>245</sup> *Idangali* (இடங்கலி) and *parai* were big measures used for measuring grain.<sup>246</sup>

Literature refers to *perunirai* and *thulam* which were used for measuring gold.<sup>247</sup> Physical balance was used in shops to weighty articles.<sup>248</sup>

### Coinage

The barter system that is the exchange of goods for goods was found from the age of Sangam. This practice was continuing the age that followed Sangam. Since there are references of *kasu*, *porkasu* and *kalanju*<sup>249</sup> in the literature money should have been the medium of exchange during the period. Scholars are of opinion that one *kalanju* of gold had the weight of forty-five or fifty *kundumani*.<sup>250</sup>

The coins with the symbol of ships were discovered in the eastern coast. Walter Elliot is of opinion that these coins would have belonged to early Pallavas. Rapson in his book 'Coins of the Andhra Dynasty' had stated that these ship coins were issued by Sathavahanas.<sup>251</sup> In one of these coins the name of the Sathavahana king Sripulumayi had been inscribed. From this it is assumed that Pallavas who established their sway after the fall of the Sathavahanas would have issued such ship mark coins.<sup>252</sup>

There is a village called Alangankulam in the region at the confluence of the river Vaigai with sea in Ramanathapuram. Certain coins and pot shells were discovered from the sands in this village. The Archaeological Department of Tamil Nadu carried on an excavation in this site and in this effort they were able to find three Roman coins. The scholars believe that these coins should have belonged from AD 300 - 400 and hence the place should have been a good business centre in those times.<sup>253</sup>

In those days the big cities had facilities like large mansions for comfortable living, big bazaars streets where all kinds of consumer products were available and also facilities for fun and entertainment. Since cost of living was high in such cities it was difficult to live there without sufficient money.<sup>254</sup>

One should not say no to a mendicant and should be willing to give up whatever he possessed. This was the lofty ideal of the age of Sangam. This sort of an idealistic life had undergone a change after Sangam. The importance and the need of wealth and the use of wealth had been much emphasised in this age. This is known through the thoughts found in Tirukkural. Hence it was felt that only a person who had enough for himself

could give to others and it was not a sin to say no when he himself did not have much to give. This sort of an expression is found in Sirupanchamulam as

"நாணிலான் சால்பும் நடைபிலான் நன்னோன்டும்  
ஊனிலான் செய்யும் உதாரதையும் - ஏணிலான்  
சேவகமும் செந்தமிழ் தேற்றான் கவி செயலும்  
நாவகமே நாடின் நகை".<sup>255</sup>

The people who were of different nature and heterogeneous in character were living together with mutual adjustments. This sort of the unity in diversity contributed for the growth and sustenance of the society. The changes that the society underwent had both good and evil aspects. These are only a part of the society. Since there were some unwanted evils in the society it cannot be said that Sangam society completely collapsed and was followed by a dark age. In the age that followed Sangam one is able to witness the continuance of the life of Sangam with certain notable changes. The society may suffer a set back due to certain disturbances or circumstances but that cannot be static.

English historian Toynbee never agreed with the idea of a golden age in history. According to him the rise and fall is the pace of the nation's progress and there is nothing unusual in the history of any country or dynasty to signs of prosperity and progress under certain given circumstances or to exhibit some clear signs for retardation or even downfall because usually it is not the making of one individual or a house of the people. A large number of factors act and react upon one another and produces result good or bad. Hence when there is no golden age in history there cannot be a dark age also in history. The history of Tamilgam between AD 300 and AD 600 was in the dark because the available source materials though limited were not properly approached and utilised to present a comprehensive history so far.

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111. *Manimekalai* 2:70
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- 133. *Naladiyar*, verse 347, *Acharakkovai*, verse 12
- 134. *Manimekalai* 2: 22
- 135. *Ibid* 10: 46
- 136. *Naladiyar*, verse 94
- 137. *Chilappadikaram*, 16: 22-8
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- 140. *Ibid.*
- 141. *Ibid.*
- 142. *Manimekalai*, 6: 91
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145. *Acharakovai*, verse 38
146. *Yeladi*, verse 45, *Mudumoli kanchi*, verse 8: 7, *Acharakovai*, verse 23
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152. *Chilappadikaram*, 26: 25-26
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156. *Tirukkural*, 1317, *Acharakovai*, verse 31
157. *Acharakovai*, verse 58
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159. *Ibid.* 44
160. *Chilappadikaram*, 5: 128-134, *Manimekalai* 1: 18-24
161. *Manimekalai*, 7: 8183, *Naladiyar*, verse 24
162. *Chilappadikaram*, chapter 17, *Uraippattumadai*, 314
163. *Acharakovai*, verse 9
164. *Chilappadikaram*, 6: 147
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166. *Acharakovai*, verse 94
167. *Ibid.*
168. *Ibid.* 30
169. *Ibid.*, verse 32
170. *Ibid.*, verse 35
171. *Ibid.*, verse 42
172. *Tirukkural*, 392, *Yeladi*, verse 64
173. *Tirikadugam*, verse 10

174. *Ibid.*, 46
175. *Sirupanchamulam*, verse 30
176. *Yeladi*, verse 63
177. *Ibid.*,
178. *Acharakovai*, verse 74
179. *Naladiyar*, verse 74
180. *Manimekalai*, 14: 17
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183. *Manimekalai*, 2: 31
184. *Sirupanchamulam*, verse 60
185. *Chilappadikaram*, 3: 40
186. *Ibid.* 5: 51
187. *Ibid.* 5: 44, *Tirukkural*, 193
188. *Enna Narpadu*, verse 29
189. *Sirupanchamulam*, verse 27
190. *Ibid.* verse 24
191. *Naladiyar*, verse 21
192. *Ibid.* verse 9
193. *Nanmanikadigai*, verse 21, 26, 29
194. *Yeladi*, verse 50
195. *Ibid.* verse 51
196. *Tirikadugam* 21
197. *Tirukkural*, 477, 478, 479, 480
198. *Sirupanchamulam*, verse 34
199. *Tirikadugam* verse 89
200. *Tirukkural*, 1036
201. Y. Subbharayalu, *Pulankurichchi Kalvettukkal, Avanam*, vol, I. Tamilaga Tholliyal Ayyvukkalaga Veliyedu, 1991 pp. 62-63
202. *Pallavar Cheppedugal Muppadu*, pp. 367-368
203. *Ibid.* p. 32

- 204. *Sirupanchamulam*, verse 60
- 205. *Tirukkural* 1037
- 206. *Kar Narpadu*, verse 33
- 207. C. Minakshi, *Administration and social life under the Pallavas*, pp, 124-130
- 208. *Manimekalai*, 28: 5-22
- 209. *PallavarCheppedugal Muppadu*, 373
- 210. C. Minakshi, *Administration and social life under the Pallavas*, pp. 130
- 211. *Chilappadikaram*, 10: 120-137
- 212. *Ibid.*
- 213. *Naladiyar*, verse 35
- 214. C. Minakshi, *Administration and social life under the Pallavas*, pp. 171-173
- 215. *Chilappadikaram*, 25: 37-49
- 216. *Ibid.*
- 217. *Ibid.* 11: 80
- 218. C. Minakshi, *Administration and social life under the Pallavas*, pp. 123
- 219. *Manimekalai*, 28: 155-162
- 220. *Tirukkural* 400
- 221. *Manimekalai*, 24: 51-54
- 222. *Ibid.* 13: 27-32
- 223. *Chilappadikaram*, 5: 16-17
- 224. *Ibid.* 4: 35-36
- 225. *Ibid.* 5: 103-106
- 226. *Ibid.* 6: 130-133
- 227. *Ibid.* 6: 144
- 228. *Ibid.* 5: 59-67
- 229. *Ibid.* 13-58
- 230. C. Minakshi, *Administration and social life under the Pallavas*, pp. 88-89
- 231. *Ibid.*
- 232. *Ibid.*
- 233. *Ibid.* p. 187

- 234. *Kar Narpadu*, verse 21
- 235. C. Minakshi, *Administration and social life under the Pallavas*, pp. 93-94
- 236. *Chilappadikaram*, 5: 16-17, 32
- 237. *Pallavar Cheppedugal Muppadu*, pp. 368, 347, 329., C. Minakshi, *Administration and social life under the Pallavas*, pp. 106
- 238. C. Minakshi, *Administration and social life under the Pallavas*, pp. 106
- 239. *Ibid.* 108
- 240. *Ibid.*
- 241. *Ibid.*
- 242. *Chilappadikaram* 3: 100
- 243. C. Minakshi, *Administration and social life under the Pallavas*, pp. 109-110
- 244. *Ibid.*
- 245. *Ibid.*
- 246. *Manimekalai*, 10: 22, *Chilappadikaram*, 14: 208
- 247. *Chilappadikaram*, 27: 174
- 248. *Ibid.* 14: 208
- 249. C. Minakshi, *Administration and social life under the Pallavas*, pp. 111
- 250. *Ibid.*
- 251. *Ibid.* p. 155
- 252. *Ibid.*
- 253. K. Sridharan, *Agazhvaraichchigalil nanayangalin pangu*, Numismatics Conference, Tiruchirapalli, 2000, p. 15-16.
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CULTURE

## Chapter IV

# CULTURE

Culture expresses itself through language and art, through philosophy and religion, through social habits and customs and through the political institutions and economic organizations. Thus culture is the totality of the experiences of the various aspects of life in society and is all embracing. Culture is like the eye (lens) of the camera through which the character of the society is focused and seen.

### **Native Religion**

In the age of Sangam the Tamil culture had taken into its fold the entire nature. The harmony of man and nature was its basic characteristics. The five geographical divisions of land as *Kurinji*, *Mullai*, *Marudam*, *Neidal* and *Palai* had a life pattern according to their nature. Each of these geographical division had a deity associated with them as Murugan (Seyon), Tirumal (Mayon), Indira (Vendan), Varunan and Korravai respectively.

The Vedic religion had become more popular in Tamil Nadu after the age of Sangam. The epics and puranas were able to exert their influence very much on the Tamil culture. Through the process of absorption and assimilation the Tamil culture had absorbed many aspects of the Vedic religion and had taken a sophisticated form. This absorption and assimilation would have taken place as a natural process as the result of the fusion of the two cultures or it might have been a reaction against the dominance of Jainism and Buddhism in Tamil Nadu. This fusion of native culture with the Vedic culture had led to the harmonious synthesis of the religions of the both cultures. Gods worshipped multiplied and they were correlated. For example

Murugan the deity attached to *Kurinji* became the son of Siva and Uma became the consort of Siva. Yanaimugatton or Vinayakar was introduced as the brother of Muruga. Tirumal who became popular as Vishnu was identified as the brother of Uma and Brahma became the son of Vishnu who originated from his *nabi*. Incarnations of Vishnu and the puranic themes on Siva and Skanda had become popular and there are a lot of references in the literature.<sup>1</sup>

This sort of a change is witnessed towards the end of the Sangam period. Kalittogai which is a later work among the eight anthologies refers to deities like Vishnu, Balarama, Lakshmi and Vinayaka.

Religion cannot escape from symbolism, from icons and crucifixes and from rites and dogmas. These forms are employed by religion to focus its faith. These have grown to a very large extent during the period.

A very significant change during the period was the advent of both Saivism and Vaishnavism which sowed the seeds of Bhakti movement. Some of the early Alwars and Karaikkal Ammayar the saint devoted to Saivism lived in this period.

The terms *Kottam*, *Niyamam* and *Nagaram* that are referred in the literature indicate the existence of temples.

உவணச் சேவ லுயர்த்தோ னியமமும்  
மேழி வலனயர்த்த வெள்ளை நகரமும்  
கோழிச் சேவற் கொடியோன் கோட்டமும்.<sup>2</sup>

## Deities

In the Tamil tradition Indira was the deity adopted from the Vedic religion and was associated with the fertile *Marudam* land. Indira, the lord of the *devas* is represented with *vajrayuda*. This deity was highly honoured in Tamil culture and the festival *Indira vizha* was conducted for the God of fertility. The temple raised for Indira was called Vajrakottam.<sup>3</sup> The deity so much associated with the Tamil culture had slowly disappeared and now Indira occupies the east as one among the *ashtabolas* in temples.

Murugan is the prime deity of the Tamil people from the age of Sangam. The Tamil people are highly possessive about this deity and they say with a sense of belongingness “*Murugakkadavul Tamilkadavul*”. Tirumurugarruppai of Nakirar mentions the six abodes of Muruga. Murugan is depicted as the son of Siva and Uma. A sculptural representation of Muruga is found in this age. Muruga is depicted with six faces and twelve hands.<sup>4</sup> He wears ornaments like *kadaka* and chains. He has the flag staff with the cock as emblem and is called *Chevarkodiyon*. His *ayudas* were *vel* and sword.<sup>5</sup> His temple was called Velkottam.<sup>6</sup> *Pinimugam* is the elephant of Muruga. His consort Valli is depicted to be with him and his *vahana* was peacock.<sup>7</sup>

Skandapurana tradition of the divine origin of Muruga from Saravanapoygai and He being brought up by the six *Kartigai* ladies finds a place in literature. *Kartigai* festival is associated with Muruga and is celebrated from the Sangam period.

Worship of Siva or *Rudra* has a very early existence. People of Indus valley worshipped Siva as *Pasupatha*. Siva represents the cosmic energy and has no origin and end. He is described as ‘*pirava yakkai udaiya eraivan*’<sup>8</sup>

that is one who is free from birth as well as death. Two of Siva temples of Kancheepuram are called, Piravadasvaram and Eravadasvaram. Muruga is identified as ‘*Alamarchelvan pudalvan*’. From this it is understood the concept of Dakshinamurthi was existing. In this depiction the lord is seated underneath a banyan tree with closed eyes and in the yoga posture. The presentation of Siva as Gangadhara, Tirupurantaka and Gajasamhara<sup>9</sup> were very popular.

Siva is depicted with three eyes and the third eye at the forehead of Siva stores all the power within him. The eighteen kinds of *ganas* associated with Siva are mentioned in *Chilappadikaram*.<sup>10</sup> Siva is described as ‘*Muzhumudal Kadavul*’ that is the first known deity.<sup>11</sup>

Vinayaka was known but was not a popular deity during this period.

Tirumal who is the deity of the forested *Mullai* land is identified with Mahavishnu in this period. Vishnu is the Saviour of the people and protects them at the time of distress. Since protecting the subjects was considered as the prime duty of the king he was often compared with lord Vishnu. Pallava rulers are described as *Bhagavatas* or *Paramabhagavatas* that is the followers of Vishnu.<sup>12</sup>

Some of the incarnations of Vishnu like Varaha, Vamana and Narasimha are referred in Paripadal. *Karuda* is the emblem in the flag staff of Vishnu. Paripadal has reference to some of the divine performances of Vishnu, like the lord descending down in the form of swan, taking in the heavy rain that was alarming the people and again taking the form of arrow of Siva in the latters act of destroying Tirupurantaka. From this it is understood that the concept of incarnations was already existing towards the end of the Sangam period. This concept was becoming more popular in this

age and there are a lot of references in the literature. Krishna's deeds in that *avatara* like stealing butter kept in *uri*, teasing the *gopikas*, showing the world in his mouth, hiding the Sun with his hand are the themes of the folk dance of Idaiyar community.<sup>13</sup> There are also references about Krishna lifting Govardhana to protect the people and also putting an end to the life of Banasura.<sup>14</sup>

Vishnu temples were known as *Neelamani Nediyon koil*<sup>15</sup> and *Manivannan kottam*.<sup>16</sup> Vishnu favoured *tuzhai* (துழைப்) garland.

It is interesting to note that Tiruvarangam finds a mention in the literature which denotes the early existence of this temple which had become a popular pilgrimage centre today in Tamil Nadu. The deity is described in *anandasayana* posture on *adisesha* in between the two rivers. Lakshmi resides on the chest of Vishnu which is described as '*Tirumagal tirumarbil uraiyum Tirumal*' (திருமகள் திருமார்பில் உறையும் திருமால்).<sup>17</sup>

The lord of Tiruvenkatam as described in the *Chilappadikaram* holds a *chakra* and a *sanku* in the right and left hands respectively and wears a *puvadai* (dress made of flowers) and his chest is adorned by a beautiful and rich *mala*.<sup>18</sup>

Vishnu in the yoga posture at Tiruvananthapuram is also mentioned in *Chilappadikaram*.<sup>19</sup> These Vaishnava sthalas in Tamilagam were pilgrimage centres in those days.

Korrvai the female deity of the *Palai* land was popularly worshipped in this age as Mahishasuramardini, the destroyer of the demon Mahisha. It is possible that the description of Mahishasuramardini in the literature should

have been thoroughly studied and absorbed by the sculptors who made the bas-relief images of the Goddess in the later years. The Goddess stands on the head of Mahisha the buffalo headed demon which serves the purpose of a *pitha*. Korravai or Kali is given all attributes of both Vishnu and Siva. She holds a *vel* in her hand and apart from the *vel* the other *ayudas* found in her hands are *trisulam*, sword, *sanka* and *chakra*. Since she possesses a sword she is called as Valuzhatti. She has a *jatabhara* on which the bone of the wild bear is worn as a crescent. The snake coils around the *jatabhara*. The teeth of the tiger are plucked out and the *pulippal tali* that is made out of them adorns her neck. The skin of the lion is worn as dress. She wears a garland that is made of both *konrai* and *thulabam*. *Konrai* is the flower favoured by Siva and *thulabam* is associated with Vishnu. The skin of the elephant is peeled and worn as a shawl. The *gajasamhara* concept is brought here.<sup>20</sup>

Korravai is also described as ‘*Kalaiyamar selvi*’ (கலையமர் செல்வி) that is one who is seated on a deer.<sup>21</sup>

The reference ‘*Aruvarkku ilaiya mangai*’<sup>22</sup> found in *Chilappadikaram* brings the possible supposition that Saptamatrika cult might have existed in this period though it is assigned to a later period. The sapthamatrikas are Indrani, Chamundi, Kaumari, Varahi, Vaishnavi, Brahmi and Mayaesvari.

### **Minor Deities**

Balarama was worshipped as deity towards the end of the Sangam period. The temple for Balarama was called Velyanai kottam<sup>23</sup> or Valiyon koil.<sup>24</sup> Balarama is represented with the flag having palm tree as the emblem.<sup>25</sup> He had plough as his ayuda and was known as Nanjil Valavan.<sup>26</sup>

The worship of the sun and the moon were in practice since temples were raised for them. These temples were called as *ucchikilan kottam* and *nilakottam*<sup>27</sup> respectively.

The worship of Ayyanar is popular even today. Ayyanar is a village god and the temple raised for him was Pachanda sattan kottam.<sup>28</sup>

Saraswati the Goddess of learning was under different names like Chintadevi and *navinkilatti*<sup>29</sup> and *navin porintiya nangai*.<sup>30</sup> Lakshmi is represented as the Goddess of wealth. Pallava kings are described as the favourite of Goddess Lakshmi.<sup>31</sup> Brahma the creator was popularly known as Nanmukhan.

Among the other female deities the people of the village had faith in the village goddesses. Madurapathi was the *kaval deivam* or protecting goddess of Madurai city. This goddess was blue on the left side of the body and golden on the right side. She was holding a lotus flower in the left hand and a *mazhu* in the right hand. Her right and left legs were adorned by *Virakkazhal* and *chilambu* respectively.<sup>32</sup>

The people in the household had family deities and they were regular in worshipping them. The worship of family deities (*illurai deivangal*) was prevalent in the age of Sangam itself. Manimekalai was the family deity of Kovalan and he named his daughter after that deity. *Eiyakki* (இயக்கி), a *vanadevadai* or forest goddess was worshipped and offerings were made.<sup>33</sup>

### Kandirpavai

A special mention should be made about the *Kandirpavai* of the epic Manimekalai. This epic mentions about a *chakkaravalakottam* which was

situated near the grave yard. Here there was a place called *ulagaravi* in which the Champapathi temple was located. This Champapathi should have been a frontier goddess since usually a grave yard would be situated only in the outskirts of a town or village. In one of the pillars of this Champapathi temple a female figure named as *Kandirpavai* is carved out or it might have been painted also.<sup>34</sup> This *Kandirpavai* had the divine quality with supernatural powers and could prophesy the future.

Manimekalai refers to this *Kandirpavai* as

கடவுள் எழுதிய நெடுநிலைக் கந்தின்<sup>35</sup>

கந்துடை நெடுநிலைக் கடவுட்பாவை<sup>36</sup>

நெடுநிலை கந்தில் நின்ற பாவை.<sup>37</sup>

The word *Kandu* in *Kandirpavai* is very old and dates back to Sangam. A pillar like structure was made out of wood and was installed and worshipped by the people of the age of Sangam.<sup>38</sup> A small structure was raised as a temple from this *kandu* and was worshipped by the people. In due course when the structure was in ruin the belief was that the deity housed in it would leave the place. The figure was drawn on the *kandu*.<sup>39</sup> It is found that the deity in the Kadirkamam temple of Sri Lanka is seen as a painting on a screen cloth. The figure was drawn on a cloth.<sup>40</sup>

There are references about *pavai* in the Sangam works. The *pavai* was drawn on the walls of the houses and was painted.

கடவுள் எழுதிய பாவை<sup>41</sup>

நன் கலம் பொன் செய்பாவை<sup>42</sup>

வண்டற் பாவை<sup>43</sup>

புனை சுவர் பாவை<sup>43</sup>

In the age of Sangam female children imagined *pavai* to be their own child and played with it. These dolls or *pavaigal* were made out of clay, wood or a particular type of grass called *Karaipul*.<sup>45</sup> When yavanas had

trade contact with Tamilagam a kind of *pavai* was imported by them from their country.<sup>46</sup> A ball and a *pavai* were tied on the flag staff planted at Madurai city.<sup>47</sup>

Vettuvavari in *Chilappadikaram* mentions that while worshipping Korraivai the eyinar (எயினார்) or *vettuvar* dressed a small girl of good ancestral background as Korraivai and she was given all the attributes of Korraivai like *pulippal tali*, peacock and cock and was placed on a deer. Among these items *pavai* was also included.

*Chilappadikaram* talks about the existence of four types of *manrams* at the *nalangadi*. One among them was *pavaimanram*.<sup>48</sup> It was the general belief in those days that the *pavai* in the *manram* would be seen in tears when the king had failed in justice.<sup>49</sup>

Thus *pavai* was mostly worshipped by women and they went on a fast called *pavainonbu*. Tiruppavai of Andal though a work of 7<sup>th</sup> century gives the details of this *pavai nonbu*.<sup>50</sup>

### **Patni Cult**

A woman who was extraordinarily virtuous and free from blemishes was elevated to a position of a demi-god. This sort of deification of a woman and raising a temple in her honour is found in the third and the final section or *kandam* of *Chilappadikaram*, which has approximately thousand lines. Madurapathi the *kaval deivam* of Madurai could not save the city from the wrath of Kannagi and the thematic expression is that Kannagi was so powerful by her virtues.

The practice of raising herostones to a fallen hero in the battlefield and worshipping it was in vogue in the age of Sangam itself. This habit was very popular during this period. Most of the herostones were discovered in the Chengam and Dharmapuri areas. In some of these stones writings are found. The inscriptions are mostly about the conflict among the minor chieftains in the border areas.

Polytheism had become the order of the time and there were many gods. This led to the construction of temples to house the gods. The kings and the affluent section of the society never hesitated to spend a part of their wealth or income to construct a temple or to make an endowment to a temple. Vishnusarman the senapathi of Vishnugopavarman had constructed a temple for Vishnu. The king had endowed 200 *nivartanas* of land from his personal property with eighteen types of exemptions. Such religious contributions were appreciated and encouraged by the king.<sup>51</sup> Charudevi the queen of Buddhavarman was intelligent enough to grant the land near Rajatataka to the temple of Narayanan at Dalura. This would have facilitated the irrigation of fields and the land could generate a good income to the temple.

Kochenganan, the Chola king had constructed innumerable temples for Siva and also for Vishnu. The Thevaram trio Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar and also Tirumangai Alwar had composed verses in praise of the king.

### **Temple Parivarahas**

According to the Pulankurichchi inscriptions during the reign of Chendan Korran Yengumaran, the son of Velkumaran had built two devakulams (temples) and one kottam. One temple was situated on

Pachcherichchil hill in Velkur at Ollaiyur kurram. Another one was located in Vilamar at Mutturru kurram.<sup>52</sup> This Muturru kurram is an area which include Arantangi and Tiruvadanai taluks of Pudukkottai district. Probably these two *devakulams* would have been dedicated to Siva and Vishnu. At present there is a Siva temple on the top of the Pulankurichchi hill but it is not an ancient temple.

These temples were managed by Attikoyattar, Ulmanaiyar and four Tinais who were temple officials. Pandankar, Cherukkar, Vrimmachcharigal, Tharumigal and Urkavalar took the responsibility of appointing the persons who conducted the daily worship. Only those who were appointed by these temple officials could perform daily pujas. The families of Velkur grama were settled near the temple at Pachcherichchal hill. Others were not permitted to settle there.<sup>53</sup> Since the temple is situated in this locality the families might have developed an involvement in the temple and officials would have felt confident to entrust certain responsibilities with them. This might have been the reason in Velkur grama family alone being considered to settle near the temple. Such settlements would have been created to assure the security of the temple. These settlements had culminated in the development of life associated with the temple. Women who served the temple were called as Talippendugal.<sup>54</sup>

Buddhism and Jainism were existing in Tamil Nadu during the age of Sangam. Ilambothiyar who had written a poem in Narrinai is considered to be a Buddhist. Tamil Brahmi script was developed by Jains in Tamil Nadu. These two religions had become popular and had created an impact on the Tamil society between AD 300 and 600.

## Buddhism

Buddhism spread to Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka earlier to this period. Dharmapala who lived in the beginning of 5<sup>th</sup> century AD had mentioned in his work *Attagatha* that he was residing in the Buddha *vihara* constructed during the period of Ashoka. Indira vihara of Kancheepuram which is mentioned in *Chilappadikaram* is identified as the *vihara* mentioned in *Attagatha*.<sup>55</sup>

The Kalabhras who occupied Chola country were not aggressive and they had encouraged Buddhism. The Kalabhras king Achyuta Vikkanta was a Buddhist. Buddhadatta therar, a Buddhist scholar was patronized by this king. Buddha *vihara* mentioned by Buddhadatta in his work *Abhidhammadvataram* was constructed by Ganadasa<sup>56</sup> and Buddha data had written this work when he was residing in this *vihara*. A Buddhist scholar Venudasa had stayed in this *vihara*.<sup>57</sup>

At Buddhamangalam in Thanjavur there was another famous vihara which was constructed by Venudasa. Buddhadatta who belonged to Uraiur wrote another work titled *Vinayavinichchayam* while staying in this vihara.<sup>58</sup> Buddhism became very popular in Kancheepuram and there was Buddha Kanchi which was associated with the religion. The last three chapters of the epic *Manimekalai* deal with Buddhist philosophy which was propagated by Aravana adikal and *Manimekalai* at Kancheepuram. Buddhagosha lived in Kancheepuram at the early years of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and he wrote a commentary on *Pitakas*.<sup>59</sup> Sumati and Jyothibalar were the contemporaries of Buddhagosha who were also serving the cause of the religion at Kancheepuram. At their request Buddhagosha had gone to Sri Lanka to propagate Buddhism. He had written a commentary on Buddhism called ‘*Manoratha Poorani*’.<sup>60</sup> *Andattakatha*<sup>61</sup> was another work of Buddhagosha

which became a guide to write his commentaries on Pitakas. These details are given by Buddhagosha in his work *Samantadasadika*.<sup>62</sup> Dharmapala, the well known Buddhist scholar hailed from Kanchi. Arurudha who wrote *Abhidhammadha sangraha* was born in Kanchi.<sup>63</sup> Mattavilasaprahasanam of Mahendravarman mentions the existence of many Buddhist centres in Kanchi. The most important among them was Rajavihara which was leading the other viharas.<sup>64</sup>

Hiuen Tsang the Chinese traveler who visited Kanchi around AD 460 had stated in his travelogue that there were nearly a hundred *viharas* and thousand monks in Kancheepuram.<sup>65</sup>

It is astonishing to note that Kancheepuram in Tamilagam just like the Pataliputra under Ashoka had an enormous contribution to Buddhism. Kancheepuram had produced certain very great Buddhist scholars who contributed immensely for Buddhist philosophy.

Unlike *Chilappadikaram*, Manimekalai is an epic which was written by the author with the motive of propagating Buddhism. The last three chapters of the epic are totally concentrated on Buddhist philosophy. Manimekalai deals more on Buddhist philosophy and does not focus on the life of Buddha. It is generally believed that Manimekalai conveys the Buddhist philosophy of Dinnaga who was living in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>66</sup>

### **Jainism**

The epigraphs in Tamil-Brahmi script that were found in the natural caverns of Tamil Nadu belong to Jain. The Tamil-Brahmi script which originated from the Brahmi script was introduced by the Jains for propagating their religion. Iravatham Mahadevan had carried an extensive

research in these natural cavern inscriptions and confirms that many of the words in these epigraphs are associated with Jainism.<sup>67</sup> Jainism had better contact with Tamil Nadu than Buddhism and its influence was found in the life and letters right from the age of Sangam.

Kalabhras who occupied Tamil country between AD 300 and 600 had descended from Sravanabelgola which was predominantly a Jain centre. They were mainly the followers of Jainism and they forced their religion in the region occupied by them in Tamil country. In this way Madurai and Kanchi had come under the influence of Jainism. Just like Buddha Kanchi there was a Jina Kanchi which was associated with Jainism.

Many of the works that came under Kilkkanakku literature including Tirukkural are considered as Jain works. *Chilappadikaram* mentions a number of names associated with Mahivira and the principles of Jainism are expressed through the character of Kaundiadigal. Tamil grammar or Nikandu is the contribution of Jains.

Vajranandi a profound Jain scholar and the disciple of Pujyapada had organized a Dravida Sangam in AD 470 at Madurai which was the seat of Tamil literary tradition before. This should have been done under the patronage of the Kalabhras with the motive of propagating Jainism. This Sangam is mentioned by Jain acharya Devasena in his work Digambara Darsan.<sup>68</sup> He was the *acharya* of the *matha* or *palli* called Srivarshamanesvara Dharma Tirttam. Vajranandi was a native of Tirupparuttikunram. In recognition of his scholarliness Simhavarman the father of Simhavishnu had endowed a village Amancherkai as Pallichandam which is entirely dealt in Pallankoil inscription.

Kalabhras had invaded and occupied the different regions of Tamilagam. Kalabhra occupation of Kanchi ad Tondaimandalam was not decisive and complete as it was in the Pandya and the Chola regions. There had been frequent conflicts between the Pallavas and Kalabhras from Kanchi. The Kalabhras who occupied Chola country were patronizing Buddhism but they were not fanatics. Achchyuta Vikkanta is a good example. The brunt of the invasion was not felt in Chola country. Since the atmosphere was conducive Kochenganan the Chola king was able to rule with might and establish himself. But it was all different in Madurai. Kalabhra invasion had done a considerable damage to the culture in Pandya country since their occupation was complete there. Kalladam has a direct reference about the havoc caused by Kalabhras in Madurai as ‘மதுனை வவ்விய கருநாடர் வேந்த னருகர்ச் சார்ந்து நின் றரண்பணி யடைப்ப’. From the verse it is clear that the Kalabhras who occupied Pandya country were, Jains and destroyed the culture there.

They had destroyed the temples in Madurai. Through the Velvikudi grant it is known that the grant made to a Vaidika Brahmin Korkaikilan Narkorran by the Pandya ruler Palyagasalai Mudumipperuvaludi in recognition of the *yaga* conducted by him at Velvikkudi was cancelled by the Kalabhras. This was restored much later by Jatila Parantaka Nedunchadaiyan the seventh king of the Kadungon line at the request of Narsingan a descendent of Narkorran. From this it is understood that co-religionists were not spared by the Kalabhras of the Pandya country and their privileges were withdrawn. Certain regions of Tamilagam had thus fallen under the spell of Jainism to a very large extent.

It is known fact in history that there were rulers who were inclined to influence the subjects with their religious beliefs. Ashoka had done it in a

sophisticated way without harming the people and through a finer expression. Whereas the Kalabhras were aggressive and forced Jainism on the people. There is the other side of the impact also. The euphoria that came out of the influence of the religion made even rulers like Mahendravarman and Arikesari Maravarman to follow Jainism.

The Kalabhra onslaught was not on the Vedic religion alone as seen in the case of the cancellation of Velvikkudi grant but also on the Tamil culture. The disasters undergone by Madurai due to Kalabhra invasion has a direct reference in Kalladam and Velvikkudi grant. In this situation Vedic influence was very much felt in this age. The emergence of Saivism and Vaishnavism is a very important development in this age. It can be judiciously suggested that the beginning of the Bhakti movement was witnessed in this period itself.

### **Beginning of Bhakti Movement**

Since Pandinadu had been terribly affected by the Kalabhra occupation the native religion was suppressed. It is believed that many of the Tamil poetry of the Sangam age including the Porul adigaram of Tolkapiyam were lost in this age. Early religious leaders in both Saivism and Vaishnavism hailed from outside Pandya country. Madurai had only four Saiva saints. They are Mangayarkarasi, Kulachchirai, Nedumaran and Murti Nayanar.

### **Karaikkal Ammayar**

Karaikkal Ammayar can be considered as the harbinger of Saivite bhakti movement in this period. She enjoyed the unique honour of going to Kailas and of being addressed as mother by Siva himself.<sup>69</sup>

The three poems composed by her are included in the eleventh Thirumurai of the Saiva canons. Among these three *pathigams* the first two express the ecstasy experienced by her on witnessing the cosmic dance of Nataraja at Tiruvalangadu. They are called as the Mutta Padikams by Sekkilar and are always prefixed in the manuscripts of Thevaram to the songs of Jnanasambandar.<sup>70</sup> Sekkilar and Saiva world had held her in high esteem as she was earlier and elder to the hymn singers in Saivism.

The miraculous life of the Ammayar is well known and need not be repeated here. She was an ardent devotee of Siva. Her original name was Tilakavadiyar and hailed from Karaikkal. She is popularly known as Karaikkal Ammayar. She was a very pious lady who derived happiness by leading a simple life that was totally devoted to Saivism and feeding the Siva *bhaktas*. When Karaikkal Ammayar came to Madurai, she found to her agony that she could not proceed with her work. Saivism could not thrive due to the influence of Jainism. She left Madurai unwilling to lead a life without devotion.<sup>71</sup> She took the ghost form. When Sambandar went to Madurai seventy five years later the queen Mangayarkarasi and minister Kulachchirai were the only followers of Saivism.<sup>72</sup> From this it can be understood that the condition would have been worst in the 5<sup>th</sup> century when Ammayar was in Madurai, a period when Vajranandi's Jain Sangam was flourishing.<sup>73</sup> When Jnanasambandar visited Tiruvalangadu he would not keep his foot there because it was the place where Karaikkal Ammayar had walked on her head. So naturally Ammayar belonged to an earlier period. She could have lived in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD and probably a contemporary of Kochenganan and Tirumoolar.<sup>74</sup>

## **Tirumoolar**

Tirumoolar who lived around 5<sup>th</sup> century AD did his penance and composed Tirumandiram from Tiruavaduturai on the banks of the river Kaviri in Chola country.<sup>75</sup>

Vaishnavism did not suffer from the attack of Kalabhras to the extent of Saivism. This would have been due to the popularity of Saivism than Vaishnavism during the period. The three early Alwars namely Poigai alwar, Bhutatalwar and Peyalwar who were born in Tondainadu belonged to this period.<sup>76</sup>

## **Kochenganan**

Kochenganan was an ardent devotee of Siva whose religious fervor had made him to build temples in the style of Madakkoil in the Thanjavur and Kumbakonam belt. He had constructed nearly seventy such temples which are sung in praise of by Tirumangai alwar. He was not a bigot and had built temples for Vishnu also. His glory was sung by the Thevaram trio Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar. It is significant to note here that, though he is a Saivite devotee it is the Vaishnavite saint Tirumangai who had mentioned the king in the eleven verses of his Tirunaraiyur pasurams. From this it is understood that in a period that was disturbed by Kalabhra occupation the king had come forward to receive the religious spirit and boldly ventured into building temples. Probably Tirumangai would have been impressed by the work of the king. It can be suggested here that since Kalabhra occupation was a common problem the king would have thought of an understanding between Saivites and Vaishnavites which was essential to resist the Kalabhras. Kochenganan had constructed a temple for Vishnu inside the Siva temple at Tiruval' karai.<sup>77</sup>

In a way all these saintly personalities paved the way for the scions like Appar and Sambandar to raise their crusade against Jainism. Among these saints Appar himself was a Jain in the beginning with the name Dharmasena. His sister Tilakavatiyar who was devoted to Saivism was able to influence him and convert him to Saivism. Through the influence of Appar, Mahendravarman who was a Jain was converted to Saivism. Appar had suffered a lot of torture under the Jains but he was able to overcome all these due to his steadfastness in bhakti and perseverance.<sup>78</sup> Sambandar did not suffer like Appar and the only incident was his residence being set fire when he came to Madurai.

Kalabhras were exterminated from Pandinadu around AD 575 by Kadungon. But the effects of the suppression of the native religion and the impact of Jainism were still persisting. Once Sambandar entered at the invitation of the queen at Madurai the situation underwent a transformation. The Pandyan king Nedumaran who was under the influence of Jainism was converted to Saivism. Sambandar had performed miracles at Madurai. An important contribution of Sambandar to the culture of Tamil Nadu is his exaltation of women which is contrary to the principles of Jainism. The miracles performed by him were associated with women.<sup>79</sup> He had high respect for Mangayarkarasi the saintly queen who had the credit of being the one and the only woman sung by Sambandar. Appar and Sambandar had done yeoman service for the revival of Saivism.

Many of the temples were in ruins in Tamil Nadu especially in the Pandya country due to Kalabhra occupation and influence of Jainism. Appar found that the temple at Palaiyarakkai called Araivadatali was closed and the Jains were claiming the temple. He went on a fast unto death till the temple was restored to worship. Hence it is understood that saint Appar was the first known Sathyagrahi in India.<sup>80</sup>

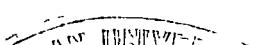
## FESTIVALS

The festivals were mostly associated with religion. They are the occasions when the people had a get-together at ease and pleasure. The festivals like Kartigai, Tiruvonam, Tiruvadirai, Tai Pongal or Tai Un and Kaman Vilavu were celebrated in the age of Sangam.<sup>81</sup> These festivals continued to be celebrated in the age after Sangam and infact even now the practice exists.

### Indira Vizha

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The most popular festival of the period was *Indira Vizha* which was celebrated for twenty-eight days in Puhar. It was conducted in honour of Indira, the lord of *Marudam* land. The epics *Chilappadikaram* and *Manimekalai* describe the festival at length.

The tradition is that on the suggestion of saint Agastiya the festival was organized by Toditot Chembian with the consent of Devendra. The Cholas followed his line and organized this festival without a break. The festival was conducted in the month of *Chiithirai* and also on star *Chiithirai*. Puhar wore a festive look during the occasion. The huge *murasu* of Vajrakottam the abode of Indira was carried on at the back of a tusker and was beaten to announce the commencement of the festival. The flag staff with the symbol of *Iravatham* was erected in front of the temple and Ashtamangalas were placed at that time. The holy water of the river Kaviri which is the sign of prosperity was carried in the golden pitchers and *abhisheka* was done for Indira by Arasakumarar and Barathakumarar<sup>82</sup> (princes of royal family and the sons of big merchant group).



Though the festival was conducted invoking Indira, all the deities from Siva to Chadukkabhetam were offered special worship. This included the Buddhist centres and Samanappallis. The concept of religious harmony was promoted by such acts.<sup>83</sup>

The streets of Puhar were decorated with *toranas*, *pavai lamp*, *poorna kumbas*, golden *palikas*, *kamugu*, banana trees, *vanji*, sugarcane, *peral* garlands, flag and festoons. In the streets and underneath the trees, new sand was spread out after removing the old one.<sup>84</sup>

The houses looked highly decorative with *muttumalas* hanging on the pillars on the *Vedika*.<sup>85</sup>

The festival was an occasion for entertaining people with dances of different types and music. From the monarch to the mendicant everybody participated in the festival which included Samayakanakkars, princes of royal family, the big business group, royal officials like *Eimperum kulu* and Enperayam and also the foreigners who had come and settled in Puhar.<sup>86</sup>

*Chilappadikaram* gives a very big list of shops in Puhar which were exhibiting various types of articles for sale in the *Nalangadis*.

There is a mythological reference in both *Chilappadikaram* and Manimekalai that the Chadukkabhetam in the *Nalangadi* of Puhar had saved the life of the king Musukundan. Hence if the festival is not conducted the city of Puhar would be swallowed by the bhutam.<sup>87</sup> According to a reference in Manimekalai Puhar was submerged in sea when this festival was not conducted. So a mythological belief had become a reality.

During the festival, people generally prayed for the well being of the king. Indira represented fertility and prosperity and hence they invoked Indira for the welfare of the people and the state.

Manimekalai says at the end of Vizhavaraikadai,

பசியும் பிணியும் பகையும் நீங்கி  
வசியும் வளனு சுரக்கென வாழ்த்தி  
அணி விழா அறைந்தனன் அகநகர் மருங்கென.

The people had the habit of taking a holy dip in the tanks of the temples. The belief was that it would get rid of their sins.<sup>88</sup>

After sun set the ladies lit the holy lamp and offered paddy and grains and worshiped the household deities. This practice is followed even today.

### **Chadukka bhutam – a belief**

Chadukka bhutam is a figure that was placed at the junction of the four streets in Nalangadi. The *bhutam* was standing for righteousness and it was generally believed that the evil elements of the society were beaten to death and swallowed by the bhutam.<sup>89</sup> Since there were no codified laws governing the society such beliefs became essential.

### **Kollippavai – a belief**

Kollippavai was worshipped in the age of Sangam. The figure of Kollippavai was engraved in stone and was treated as a *kaval deivam*. Just like the *Chadukka bhutam* the *pavai* would kill the evil elements in the society to save the people. *Chilappadikaram* refers to Pavaikuthu which was

dance performed by Tirumagal in the form of *Kollipavai*. *Kollipavai* was usually depicted with the dress and weapons of war.

செருவெங்கோல மவணர் நீங்கத்  
திருமகள் செப்யோளாடிய பாவையும்.<sup>90</sup>

## Architecture

The rich literary sources of the Sangam period provide rich information about the secular and religious architecture of the period.

In the age of Sangam the socio-economic status of the individuals decided the type of building. The poor people lived in thatched houses called Kurumbai made of grasses like *kusa*, *darbai* and *ugam*.<sup>91</sup> The affluent section of the society constructed houses according to their needs and social status. They were known as Valamanai and Nagar.<sup>92</sup> Palaces with fortifications were built for royal families. The architects who were called Noolari Pulavar consulted the available text on architecture while undertaking constructions.<sup>93</sup>

The earliest form of religious architecture was a simple cell with a wooden plank that was installed inside. The cell was called Podiyil<sup>94</sup> and the plank was worshipped as Kantu.<sup>95</sup> From the name *Podiyil* it is understood that it was a common place where the people met for religious purpose. The deities were painted on the wall and worshipped. This simple building had brick wall and wooden roof.

The increase in the number of devotees who visited the temple from distant places necessitated the construction of halls in front of the Sanctum. Some of the halls were plastered with stucco and occasionally decorated with

pearls and precious gems. Development of different cults caused an increase in the number of temples and alteration in the placement of deities. The stucco figures served as presiding deities in the Sanctum. The contact between the temple and the society was strengthened by increasing temple activities like rituals, religious discourses and festivals. This further expanded the structure of the temple.

An increase in the number of buildings both secular and religious is witnessed in the period between AD 300 and 600. A very important development in the town planning of the period. Puhar is described in *Chilappadikaram* as a well planned city.

### **Secular Architecture**

There was not a big difference from the age of Sangam concerning the techniques of constructions. But there was an appreciable development in the decorative aspects. Most of the urban areas had well planned streets with brick buildings built according to the status of the people. *Perumanai*, *Agalmanai* and *Valamanai* were some of the terms used to denote the size and richness of the houses.<sup>96</sup>

The urban buildings were built of the burnt brick and mostly were smeared with stucco. Raised platforms at the sides of the entrances of these buildings helped the elders to rest and was called as *Vedigai*.<sup>97</sup> The entrances were filled with door frames of good height. The interior had several rooms according to the need and status of the family. The pillars of certain Palatial houses were covered with gold plates and were decorated with strings of Pearls. The compound wall around the houses were also built of bricks and were plastered with Stucco. The windows facilitated good aeration and were called *Salaras*. A well formed *Kapota* which was the extension of the roof

saved the structure from rain and also provided shelter for birds.<sup>98</sup> Most of the houses had *pandals* in front to provide shade during summer.<sup>99</sup> *Nilamutram* is an important feature in the houses.<sup>100</sup> Some of the houses were painted on walls and roof.<sup>101</sup> Pearls and gems decorated the windows of the houses of affluent people. *Makara toranas* formed with the objects of *ashtamangalam* added beauty and sanctity to the entrance of the house. Wood was much used next to brick to make doors, beams and windows. Carpenters expressed their artistic skills in making very elegant carvings on wood.

The houses of the people of the lower strata of the society remained the same both in style and structure as that of the age of Sangam.<sup>102</sup>

Many architectural terms are found in the literature of the period which should be specifically mentioned here.

பத்தி வேதிகைப் பசும் பொற்றுணத்து  
முத்து தாமம் முறையொடு நாற்றுமின்<sup>103</sup>

In the above lines from Manimekalai, *patti*, *vedigai*, *thun* and *thamam* are associated with architecture.

The term *patti* denotes the division of the *adishtana* and the wall portion of the temple into three parts. The projections are *Karma*, *Salad* and *Karma* and in between them the recession is found.

Karma Projection	Recession	Salad Projection	Recession	Karma Projection
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This *patti* can be shown in the same line with demarcation.

This sort of *patti* division is found for the first time in the monolith Arjuna ratha at Mamallapuram. Here there are three *patti* divisions. The Tiruppattur Kailasanatha temple in the periphery of Tiruchirappalli town has five divisions of Patti. These *patti* divisions had taken the form of subordinate Vimanas (துணை விமானங்கள்) in the Talagirisvarar of panamalai, Kailasanatha temple of Kanchi and Virattanesvaram temple of Tiruvadigai.

Vedika is a component which is usually found above the *adishtana* of a temple and below the wall or *bitti*. This will be usually supported by a Thamarai Vari below and the Kanta complex. This structure mentioned in Manimekalai and Naladiyar is seen for the first time in Kshatriyasimhesvaram in the shore temple complex built under Rajasimha. Vedika is also found after the end of the *tala* on which the *griva* rests. The structure which is identified as *thinnai* or *therri* in literature is a surface on which people rest. Vedika is also a member found in the Hara structures of *karnakutas*, *Salad* and the *Panjaras* between them.

The term 'தூணத்து முத்துத் தாமல்' in Manimekalai denotes the mala on pillars. This *mala* hangs from the *malasthana* of the pillars in most of the temples of Tamilnadu. In the pillars of some of the temples beautiful and elegant figures especially figures in dancing postures are found in this portion.

"ஆங்கது கேட்டு ஓர் அரமியம் ஏற்ற  
தாங்காது வீழ்ந்து தாரைசாவுற்ற தூமல்"<sup>104</sup>

The term Aramiyam in the above line is found in the Sangam literature itself. Maduraikanchi says,

"நிரை நிலை மாடத்து அரமியம் போலும்  
மழையாய மதியிற் தோன்றுபு மறைய"<sup>105</sup>

Aramiyam or Harmya as it is called refers to the upper portion of the house. In the temple architecture the term Harmya means the wall portion of the *talas* in the Vimana.

பவளத் திரள்காற் பன்மணிப் போதிகை  
 தவள நித்திலத் தாமறு தாழ்ந்த  
 கோணச் சந்தி மாண்வினை விதானத்துத்  
 தமனீயம் வேய்ந்த வகைபெறு வனப்பிற  
 பைஞ்சேறு மெழுகாப் பசும் பொன்மண்டபத்து.<sup>106</sup>

The above lines from Manimekalai refer to *Potikai*, *Vidanam* and *Mantapam*. Among these *Potikai* is a part of a pillar on which the *uttira* rests. The structure has a splendid development at various stages and helps a lot to determine the age of the temple. This part was found in the beginning in wood and was later on adopted in the structure made out of stone also. It was a simple *Potika* with *tharanga* and had a *Kulavu*. Later on it became a *Vettuppotika* and *pumottu*, *madalai* arrangement, *perumottu*, *nanudal* were later developments. In the Pandya cave at Malayadikkurichchi the foundation inscription is seen on the potika of the pillar.

The term *Vidanam* is a Sanskrit word that denotes the roof. *Mantapam* is referred in the inscriptions as *mantakam*. The cave at Tirukkazhukuram is called as *Oru Kal Mantakam*. Kuranganilmuttam cave is referred to as 'Kal Mantakam'. Every temple starting from early Pallava caves had mantapams. This mantapa expanded in the later years as *Nuru Kal Mantapam* and *Ayiramkal mantapam*.

## **Town Planning**

Puhan city's planning was more based on the commercial activities. Since Puhan was situated in the coastal region it became the centre for maritime trade with merchant ships always on the seas. The coastal region was Pattinappakkam and the inland was Maruvurpakkam. The Nalangadi was situated in between these two areas and here only the commercial activities took place. It was a busy market place.<sup>107</sup>

The streets in Puhan were called as Vidi or teru. Probably the term Vidi would have been used to denote big roads. Rajaperumvidi, Koditervidi and Pidigai teru were some of them.<sup>108</sup> There were also streets where the big merchant community lived.

There were the settlements of the Panchagramis who were the Vedic brahmanas. The agriculturists, Physicians, astrologers and other professionals were living in separate colonies in Puhan.<sup>109</sup> Some of the streets of Puhan were identified either by the particular item of article sold or a particular group living in that street. There were cross streets that were cutting across the main road.

## **Religious Architecture**

An enormous increase in the number of religious buildings is noted in the post Sangam period. Temples are referred as Kottam, Niyamam and Koil in the literature. But it is difficult to demarcate the differences between them. Temple is referred as Devakulam in the epigraph<sup>110</sup> and the literature<sup>111</sup> of the period. It may be presumed that the temples of the major gods were bigger in size and occupied a larger area than the temples of the minor deities. The term kuchchara Kudigai<sup>112</sup> is associated with the minor temple. For example a Kaval deivam.

These temples and shrines had a sanctum and a mantapa in front. In certain cases there was a compound wall around them which had an entrance in the front.<sup>113</sup> The pillars of the temple had the icons of pavai carved in them which was termed as Kandirpavai.<sup>114</sup> A Mahamantapa that was included as an axial structure in front of the shrine was a rare feature.<sup>115</sup>

The construction techniques and materials were almost the same for both the secular and the religious architecture. It is not possible to account for the exact construction of the temple with the stray references that are available in the literature. The increase in the number of deities and the development of various cults and associated rituals suggest that a number of temples were existing. There was a codified text called Chirppanul which guided the constructions.<sup>116</sup>

### **Madakkoil**

The period from A.D 300 to 600 was a land mark in the field of architecture. A new concept in the construction of structural temples was introduced by Kochenganan in the style of Madakkoil. It was also called as Perunthirukkoi.<sup>117</sup> In this style the Vimana was constructed on an empty Tala. This tala was raised to a considerable height. In some cases this tala had components like adhishtana, bitti and roof and even niches on the wall. The madakkoil at Nallur is a good example for this type of a structure (see Appendix II). Through the literary sources it is understood that nearly seventy such temples were built by Kochenganan in the Thanjavur-Kumbakonam belt. R. Kalaikkovan of Dr. M. Rajamanikkanar Centre for Historical Research, Tiruchirappalli had identified nearly twenty two such temples and many of them are in dilapidated condition.

These temples would have been constructed on a raised empty tala to protect them from torrential rains which would result in flood situation. These temples would have been constructed out of brick, mud and mortar. Hence they are liable to be affected by natural calamities. This made the king to raise the vimana on an empty tala. Granite was not in use in the construction of the temple in those days and materials used were perishable. These temples are popularly known as '*Yanai Yera Koil*' (யானை ஏறா கோயில்). This idea was formed based on a mythology associated with the life of Kochengangan who is included among the sixty three nayanmars.

An upsurge in the religious consciousness in the society resulted in the rise of many temples. Both Saivism and Vaishnavism received due patronage inspite of the dominance exercised by heterodox religions (refer Appendix II). Several pockets of Tamil Nadu except Pandya region joined the general current of an architectural renaissance caused by the religious awakening. Saints from both Saivism and Vaishnavism sacrificed their best towards the cause of their religion which made the people throng at the temples and get involved in their activities.

Mahendravarman (AD 590-630) the prodigy of the Pallava dynasty had revolutionised architecture by breaking the tradition and boldly venturing into the use of stone, a non-perishable material in architecture. The creative mind of Mahendra who is popularly known as Vichchitracitta wanted to make the contribution permanent and enduring and he came out of the taboo that stone was inauspicious for building temples.

The solid rock was scooped out and shaped into a cave temple as the abode of god. It was usually a mantapa shrine with a facade, an interior mantapa that was sometimes divided into two by an additional row of pillars and the sanctum at the back wall. The ever flourishing imaginative mind of

Mahendravarma brought about nuances in the cave architecture like the wonderful sculptural panel of Gangadisvara in the Lalithankura Pallava Eswaragriham at Tiruchirappalli and the lotus medalian and Porch in the Satrumallesvaram of Dalavanur.

His first experiment on cave architecture was at Mandagappattu. The foundation inscription of Mahendravarman in the Mandagappattu cave mentions that the temple timber less, mortar less, brick less and metal less was made by Vichchitrachitta as the abode of Brahma, Vishnu and Esvara. This inscription is historically very significant since it has the direct reference about the author of the cave and also about the method of construction.

Mahendravarma had excavated nearly seventeen caves which include the well known caves at Mandagappattu, Mahendravadi, Pallavaram, Tiruchirappalli upper rock, Mamandur, Siyamangalam, Dalavanur and Vallam.

### **Dance and Music**

Dance and music which were existing more in the form of folk arts in the Sangam age underwent an astonishing change in the period between AD 300 and 600. Dance had almost become a profession and was performed on the stage based on certain norms.

*Chilappadikaram* is a magnificent treatise on dance and music and has relevance to the artists of any age. Arrangerru Kathai, Kadaladu Kathai, Vettuvavari, Ayechchiyar Kuravai and Kunrakkuravai of *Chilappadikaram* store a lot of very rich information about dance. While describing about the dance performance of Madavi, *Chilappadikaram* gives the details about the

art of dance and music, dance teachers, musicians both vocal and instrumentalists, performance stage, make-up and other details. Manimekalai also has references about dance and music.

Dance required an austere training and practice before the performance on the stage. There were teachers called adalasan who were engaged to train the children in dance. Learning started at the age of five on an auspicious day and an auspicious time. The learning process went on for a period of seven years. The teacher would have witnessed the progress of the disciple and accordingly the performance was done. All these details are found in the Arangerru Kadai of *Chilappadikaram*.

The teachers were expected to have a basic interest in dance and music and should have an aesthetic sense in general. In those days prostitutes performed dance to entertain the royal household and the affluent section of the society. They were good in the art of painting and had interest in dressing and preparation of make-up materials, etc.<sup>118</sup> It is understood that there was Nattianannul which was guiding the teachers in training the students in dance. The kol used for tala while giving practice was called Thandiyam.<sup>119</sup> They tied flowers and applied Sandalwood paste to this kol and offered prayer to it before the learning started.

*Chilappadikaram* has a vivid description about the qualifications of the teacher who trained the disciple in this art. These teachers had to be well versed in all aspects of dance, the texts and treatises on dance and music. They should be accomplished in the science of music and should possess knowledge on the methods of playing musical instruments. The teachers themselves should be performers.<sup>120</sup>

Dance as an art should be accompanied by music which is inextricably connected with dance. The performers of nattuvangam that is the group who sing and play instruments have an important role in the performance of dance on the stage.<sup>121</sup> The impression that is formed over the performance of a danseuse is highly depended on the theme chosen and the musicians and instrumentalists who do nattuvangam. So naturally when dance became a profession and moved towards perfection; music also simultaneously developed.

The dance performed in those days were in two forms called Vettiyal and Poduviyal. Vettiyal was performed before the king and Poduviyal was for the public.<sup>122</sup> Again the dance performed came under the two groups. *Agakuttugal* and *Purakkuttugal*.<sup>123</sup> Among the agakuttu dance *Chilappadikaram* had concentrated more on Kuravai dance. Kuravaikuttu was existing during the age of Sangam. But in the post Sangam period Kuravai was more associated with god. *Chilappadikaram* had dedicated separate chapters for Aichiyarkuravai and Kunrakkuravai.

Aichiyar Kuravai is a group dance performed by the people of Mullai land invoking Lord Krishna. His avatars became the main theme of the dance. It can be noted from the following lines that the bhakti rasa is complete and Krishna is depicted as the supreme deity.

பெரியவனை மாணவனைப் பேருலகமெல்லாம்  
விரிகுமல வூந்தியுடை விண்ணவனைக் கண்ணும்  
திருவடியுங் கையுந் திருவாயுஞ் செய்ய  
கரியவனைக் காணாத கண்ணென்ன கண்ணே  
கண்ணிஷைமத்துக் காண்பார்தங் கண்ணென்ன கண்ணே  
மடந்தாழ நெஞ்சத்துக் கஞ்சனார் வஞ்சம்  
கடந்தானை நூற்றுவர்பா னாற்றிஷையும் போற்றுப்  
படர்ந்தாரண முழங்குப் பஞ்சவர்க்குத தூது  
நடந்தானை யேத்தாத நாவென்ன நாவே  
நாராயணா வென்னா நாவென்னா நாவே.<sup>124</sup>

Just like the people of Mullai land, the people of Kurinji had also performed Kuravai invoking Lord Muruga. Muruga's personality, his vel and the heroism played by him in destroying the demon Surapadman and also the natural resources of the Kurinji land were the themes of Kuravai.<sup>125</sup>

Veriyattu was performed right from the days of Sangam. The person who performed the dance was possessed and danced in ecstasy. The person who performed this dance was called as Velan. This Veriyaduthal was connected with Kurinji in the age of Sangam. In the post-Sangam period Veriyattu was associated with the people of Palai land. Korra vai was invoked while performing the dance. This Veriyaduthal in Palai land was performed by a women of Yeinar family (யெனார்) Salini<sup>126</sup> who was otherwise known as Devaratti. The man who performed Veriyattam was Devaralan.

### **Purakkuthu**

There were different types of Purakkuthus. Among them Vasai Kuthu and Venrikuthu were popular in those days. The theme of the Vasaikkuthu was teasing a figure or something that was in notice.<sup>127</sup>

A girl from the Yeinar family was dressed and adorned like Korra vai and she was given a bow. She was seated on a Kalaiman (deer) and offerings like pavai, parrot, dye materials, lime, puzhukkal, ninachchoru, flowers and articles with fragrance were made. Korra vai as kali the destroyer of evils like Mahisha was the theme of Venrikuthu and it was performed before the girl dressed like Kali.<sup>128</sup>

Ter Kuravaigal that were performed in the Sangam age continued in this period also. They were called as Munterkuravai and Pinterkuravai.

Munter Kuravai was performed invoking Mayon or Tirumal and episodes from Bhagavata, Ramayana and Mahabharata were the themes of the dance. Pinterkuravai was performed in the mood of celebration of victory in war.<sup>129</sup>

*Chilappadikaram* refers to eleven types of dances that come under the norms of Purakkuthu. They are Kodukotti, Pandarangam, Alliyam, Malladal, Thudiyadal, Kudaiyadal, Kudakkuthu, Pediyal, Marakkadal, Parai and Kadaiyam.<sup>130</sup> There is a reference about Valkuthu performed by women in *Chilappadikaram* and Naladiyar. This dance was performed by standing on the Marakkal. *Chilappadikaram* presents Madavi as an exponent of all the eleven types of dances in Purakkuttu.<sup>131</sup>

*Chilappadikaram* describes about the appearance of the performing stage. The measurement used for building the stage was called *Erupattu nalu viral kol* (இருபத்து நாலு விரல் கோல்)<sup>132</sup> The measurement of the stage, the pillars erected on the stage, decorations that adorned the stage, the paintings of the four Varunabhutas are elaborately discussed in the Arangerru Kadai of *Chilappadikaram*.<sup>133</sup> However proficient the danseuse might be the stage appearance is very important to impress the audience. This aspect was well considered before the performance of dance. Every minute aspect of this art was given utmost importance and it can be specifically stated here that *Chilappadikaram* can be a guide book for every performing artist.

Talaikkol<sup>134</sup> was the most envious honour awarded to the excellent performance in dance. Madavi was honoured with Talaikkol for her scintilating performance of dance before the king. This Talaikkol has a reference to the mythological episode connected with Jayanthan<sup>135</sup> the son of Indira and was worshipped.

## Music

Music as an art is associated with dance and naturally it also found a marvellous growth in this period. The term Kotti meant tala in music. There is a reference in Tirikadugam that music set on tala beat alone is worthy of hearing.<sup>136</sup> This shows the development of science of music in this age.

There were composers of music and musicians who were able to give heart rendering music through their melodious voice.

Music was handed down from generation to generation through the centuries only in oral tradition. There is no way of knowing precisely about the musical scales used in ancient Tamilagam except through treatises on music and the living tradition of the hymnal music for example the folk music.<sup>137</sup>

*Chilappadikaram* is the most important source of information on the art of music. A number of musical scales are mentioned in it. S. Ramanathan who had worked on music in *Chilappadikaram* opines that it is a veritable treasure of source material for understanding the history of music in ancient Tamilagam for a student of musicology. *Chilappadikaram* contains the description of certain pans.<sup>138</sup>

Music is introduced in *Chilappadikaram* only when there is a relevance to the story. Most of the references to music are found in the Arangerru Kadai dealing with the debut of the danseuse, Kanalvari and Aichiyar Kuravai. In the Arangerrukadi the qualifications of the vocal musician, Yaazh player, flutist, drummer and dance teacher are narrated. The musical instruments that were used at the debut are mentioned. The

technique of playing stringed instruments like Yaazh is mentioned in Kanalvari. In other chapters also there are references about music.

Music was everywhere and in every thing in Tamilnadu. The cultivators while ploughing the land were in the habit of singing a particular type of song that had suited the occasion. It was called Yermangalam. Mugavai pattu was sung while measuring the grains in the field.<sup>139</sup>

There is a wide gap of several centuries between the date of *Chilappadikaram* and that of the commentaries of Arumpada Urai and Adiyarkkunallar. There is no way of dating the treatises mentioned in them. Some of the pans mentioned in *Chilappadikaram* would have been earlier to it. Despite these limitations the commentaries on *Chilappadikaram* throw a beam of light which brightens up the past.

Tamil Nadu had never failed in encouraging artists belonging to other regions even in those days. Dancers with their female pairs from Konganam and Karnataka were in the Court of the king to entertain the royal household.<sup>140</sup> Both Kongana Kuttan and Karnataka Kuttan and their viralis (female pair) had dressed and performed according to their tradition.<sup>141</sup>

## **Paintings**

Painting was also existing as an art. The walls and roofs of the houses of affluent section of the society were painted. Palaces of the king had paintings. Paintings were found on the temple walls. Kandirpavai mentioned in Manimekalai is a painted figure. Since it is mentioned as ‘கந்தில் எழுதிய அந்புதப் பாலை’ it should have been a painted figure. Manimekalai refers to the existence of a treatise on painting called Oviachchennul.<sup>142</sup> The kol or

brush used for painting was called Vattigai.<sup>143</sup> The chitra mantapam mentioned in Manimekalai was constructed with the guidance of expertise from Yavana, Avanti and Magada and as the name denotes the mantapa had beautiful paintings.<sup>144</sup>

## Parks

The parks maintained had satisfied the purpose of relaxation and enjoying the gentle breeze from the garden and the fragrance of the flowers. These parks had a variety of trees and flowers like manjadi, Vetchi, Surapunnai, Thazhai, Chemmullai, Asoka, Mungil, Shanbagam and Ilavam with red flowers. This park was envisaged and created by the experts who had a taste and interest with aesthetic sense in the flora and fauna.<sup>145</sup>

## Sakkaravalakottam of Manimekalai

When people believed that some miraculous event had happened at a particular place, that place would naturally gain importance. The Sakkaravalakottam of Manimekalai epic is one such place.

This Sakkaravalakottam was situated near the grave yard and hence it was called as Chudukadu kottam. While passing through the entrance of Sakkaravalakottam at a place called Ulagaravi the temple of Chempabathi existed. Champabathi was a Kaval deivam and the Kandirpavai was found only on the pillar of the temple of Champabathi. The story goes that a woman Godamai had brought her dead child to the grave yard and prayed to Champabathi to bring her son back to life so that he might be of use to her blind husband. Champabathi expressed the impossibility of restoring life to an already dead person which was against nature. On hearing this Godamai had decided to end her life. In this situation Champabathi as Kaval deivam

had shown all her powers and had brought all the devas at that place to convince Godamai. Though Godamai was convinced she cremated the child and died there itself.<sup>146</sup>

In order to show the divine power of Champabathi the place where all the devas assembled was made a wonder land and was called Sakkaravalakottam. The Mahameru, the hills surrounding it, small islands, different living beings and their dwelling places were all created. This was the work of Mayan who was a *deiva thachchan* (builder) with enormous powers and intelligence.<sup>147</sup> From the description it is understood it was more or less like the modern Disney land. Though it was called Chudukadukottam it had nothing to do with the graveyard.

The dead bodies were cremated in the grave yard and according to the custom and practices of each community they had separate places for cremation. This only indicates that caste differences were observed even in cremating a life-less human being.<sup>148</sup>

### **Some Aspects of culture**

Receiving a guest with a smiling face and accommodating them with a pleasant disposition is the prime aspect of Tamil culture right from the age of Sangam. This culture continued.

Tirukkural says,  
கெல்விருந்து ஓம்பி வருவிருந்து பார்த்திருப்பான்  
நல் விருந்து வானத்தவர்க்கு (Kural 86)

Kannagi the heroine of *Chilappadikaram* stands as the good example of this tradition. When Kovalan had lost all his wealth to Madavi and returned empty handed, Kannagi felt that injustice had been done to her. Her

grievance was not the loss of wealth but she had been reduced to a position of not being able to receive the guest. This she had openly expressed.

அழவோர்க் களித்தலு மந்தன ரோம்பலும்  
துறவோர்க் கெதிர்தலுந் தொல்லோர் சிறப்பின்  
விருந்தெதிர்கோடலு மிழந்த வெண்ணை<sup>149</sup>

While introducing Kannagi to Madari the family background of Kannagi and Kovalan were narrated by Kaundiadigal. This culture was adopted for two reasons. Since they were strangers Madari should be free from suspicions about them and they should be treated well. More over through such an introduction Kannagi could feel at ease in a new environment.

When a person who is stranger to a place was arriving as a guest one who played the host provided them all their needs since they were not accustomed to the place. This culture was found in Madari. She not only accommodated Kovalan and Kannagi but also provided all their requirements. Madari felt that she was bound to do it since they were left under her care by Kaundiadigal. Infact when Kovalan was murdered at Madurai leaving Kannagi in a pitiable condition, Madari felt guilty of not fulfilling the obligation of protecting them as they were under her care. This feeling of guilt had made her to commit suicide. Kaundiadigal also felt guilty and committed suicide. This is a very fine expression of the sublimity of the culture of the period.

## Literature

The age that had been labelled as the dark age by many scholars owns a very rich literature that was ever produced by Tamilnadu with the exception of the Sangam literature. This wonderful growth of literary

tradition had helped to bring out the age to light from the scales of darkness. Tirukkural and the epics *Chilappadikaram* and *Manimekalai* are the wonderful creations of the age.

The evolution of didactic poems that were compiled as Pathinenkilkanakku literature belonged to this age. The Kalabhra invasion had set in a situation of anarchy and many values of life were disappearing. In such circumstances the philosophers would play a vital role in society through their thoughts and ideas that were expressed in writing.

Tirukkural of Tiruvalluvar is a world renowned didactic literature of the time which deals with the three aspects of life that are ethical (*Aram*) materialistic (*porul*) and worldliness (*Kamam*). As a literature that concentrates on ethical values in life it has the credit of being translated into many languages both Indian and foreign.

The other Kilkankku works are (1) Naladiyar (2) Nanmanikkadigai (3) EniyavaiNarpadu (4) Enna Narpadu (5) Kalavazhi narpadu (6) Kar narpadu (7) Eintinai Eimpadu (8) Eintinai elupadu (9) Tinaimozhi eimpadu (10) Tinaimalai nurriaimbadu (11) Tirikadugam (12) Acharakkovai (13) Pazhamoli Nanuru (14) Sirupanchamulam (15) Mudumozhi Kanchi (16) Yeladi (17) Kainnilai. Scholars are of opinion that many of them are Jain works.

Among these seventeen works, Kalavazhi Narpadu is different and is an eulogy on Kochenganan. It is about the exploits of the king with an elaborate description of war scenes. Kalavazhi Narpadu of Poigayar should have given an impetus for the rise of parani literature in the later period for example the Kalingattupparani of Jayamkondar.

The age takes the pride of owning the grand epics *Chilappadikaram* and *Manimekalai* which are the sources for building the socio-cultural History of the period. But for these two works the history of the period would have been lost.

Though *Chilappadikaram* exalts Jain religion<sup>150</sup> the other cults that were in vogue had been given due place in the epic. This is known through the chapters that are dealing with Vettuvavari, Aichiyar Kuravai and Kunrakkuravai. In the chapter Indiravizhavu Urar eduttakadai a list of the temples of different deities worshipped in Tamilagam is given.

*Manimekalai* is a Buddhist work. There is an opinion that the work would have been written under the patronage and influence of the successors of the Kalabhakula Buddhist king Achchyuta Vikkanta.<sup>151</sup>

Tirumular who wrote his *Tirumantiram* in over 3000 verses was hailing from the Chola country.

Karaikkal Ammayar had composed four works which are found in the eleventh Tirumarai of Saiva canons. They are Arpuda Tiruvantadi, Tiruvirattai Manimalai and two Mutta Padigams on Tiru Alangadu. This Arpuda Tiruvantadi consists of 101 verses and is an expression of the intense devotion of ammayar towards Siva.<sup>152</sup> She expresses,

அன்றும் திருவுருவம் காணாதே ஆப்பட்டேன்  
இன்றும் திருவுருவம் காண்கிலேன் - என்றுந்தான்  
எவ்வுருவோன் நூப்பிரான் என்பார்க்க கென்னுறைக்கேன்  
எவ்வுருவோ நின்னுருவம் எது (Arpuda Tiruvandadi, 61)

Buddha datta, a Buddhist scholar was living in the Chola country in the early years of 5<sup>th</sup> century. He was the author of Buddhist works Buddhavamsaddakada, Abhidhammadvatara, Vinayavinichchiyam, Uttaravinichehayam, Ruparupanibagam and Jibalankaram in Pali language.<sup>153</sup> He was staying in the Buddhist monasteries at Kavirippumpattinam, Uraiur, Budhamangalam and Kancheepuram. He was patronised by Kalabhra ruler Achchyuta Vikkanta.

Buddhadatta in his Abhidhammadvatara describes river Kaviri as

நர நார் கணாகின்னே அஸங்கின்னே குலாகுலே  
பீதே ஸப்பங்க ஸம்பன்னே பஸன்னே ஸரிதோதகே  
நானா ரத்ன ஸம்பன்னே விவிதாபன ஸங்கதே  
காவேரி பட்டண ரம்மே நானா ராமோ ஸங்கதே  
கோவூஸ ஸிக்ராகார பாஸாத பதி மண்டதே  
காரிதே கணதாஸேன தஸ்ஸனியே மனோரமே  
விழாரே விவிதாகார சாருபாகார கோடுரே

In the aforesaid lines in Pali language Buddhadatta describes the resourcefulness and prosperity of Kaviripumpattinam. According to him it was a populous city. When he was residing in the vihara constructed by Ganadasa he wrote the above work.<sup>154</sup>

Kancheepuram had also produced eminent Buddhist scholars like Buddhagosha. He had written a commentary on Buddhism called Manorathapoorani. Dharmapala was associated with Nalanda University. Another scholar Aruruddha wrote Abhidhammadtha Sangraha.

The period of Simhavishnu and Mahendravarman the rulers of the Pallava dynasty had produced Sanskrit scholars. Bharavi wrote Kiratarjuniya.<sup>155</sup> The royal author Mahendravarman I wrote

Mattavilasaprahasana. The satirical work portrays the contemporary life of some of the religious sects. Mattavilasaprahasana is one of the finest sources in which action centres around the frolics of a drunken Kapalika, his wife and a Buddhist bikshu of loose morals, a Pasupatha and a lunatic. Mahendravarman is also the author of a work on painting, Dakshinachitra, referred to in the mutilated Sanskrit inscription in one of the caves of Mamandur. Mahendravarman is considered as the author of another play Bhagavadajjugam. There is a poem composed by him in Sanskrit.

### **Script**

The most notable development of the period was the evolution of Vatteluttu and Tamizh script from the Tamil-Brahmi script. Pulankurichchi inscription which is assigned to 5<sup>th</sup> century by scholars shows the transition of Tamil-Brahmi into Vatteluttu. The social background of this transition in the script should be considered for a serious and meticulous study.

Some musical instruments of the period known through literature:

<b>Narambu Karuvi</b> (Stringed Instruments)	<b>Thol Karuvi</b> (Percussion Instruments)	<b>Tulai Karuvi</b> (Wind Instruments)	<b>Kancha Karuvi</b> (Tala Vadhyas in metal)
1. Yaazh	1. Murasu (used in war) – Kadippu – the beating stick of Murasu.	1. Kuzhal	1. Kodumani
2. Vinai	2. Tannumai	2. Konrai Kuzhal	2. Pandil
3. Yaazh varieties	3. Muzhavu	3. Ambal Kuzhal	
4. Adhi yaazh (1000 stringed – became obsolete)	4. Idakkai or Amatirikai	4. Sankam	
5. Peri yaazh – 21 stringed	5. Kutukkai or Avanchi Parai	5. Kombu	
6. Makara yaazh – 19 stringed	6. Valvalai	6. Valvalai	
7. Sakoda yaazh – 14 stringed	1. (Kodumparai (war))	7. Panilam	
8. Chengottu yaazh – 7 stringed	2. Naazhigaiparai (to indicate time)	8. Karugu	
9. Parivadini yaazh (Mahendravarman I supposed to be wellversed in it)	3. Sirupari (small) 4. Thondagapparai (Kurinjiparai) 5. Kudamuzha Thudi (Kurinjiparai)		
10. Midarru sarira vina (human voice)	6. Murugiyam (Kurinjiparai) 7. Murudu (Maddalam) 8. Palliam (played in the morning at temple and palace)		

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# **CONCLUSION**

## **CONCLUSION**

The history of Tamil Nadu from AD 300 to AD 600 which is called as Kalabhra interregnum is shrouded in mystery. It is considered as the dark age and is an insignificant chapter in the history of Tamil Nadu.

Reputed scholars C. Minakshi, M. Rajamanikkanar and S. Gopal who had written on the history of the Pallavas and K.K. Pillai who wrote on the socio-cultural history of Tamils have mentioned the events of the period precisely. M. Arunachalam's endowment lecture on 'Kalabhra in the Pandya Country and Their Impact on Life and Letters there' published by the University of Madras has made an elaborate study of the Kalabhras and the impact of their invasion in Tamil Nadu. All these scholars have provided rich information about the period with the available source materials. Since the existing facts have not been correlated and presented as a part of Tamil Nadu history the continuity is lost for a considerable period of 300 years. This work had identified the missing link and had given a continuity to the history of Tamil Nadu.

Since it is a neglected period in the history of Tamil Nadu an in-depth study of the source materials was attempted. The copper plates of the early Pallava rulers issued in Prakrit and Sanskrit and those of the imperial Pallavas of Simhavishnu line and the Pandya copper plates throw much light about these dynasties. The lithic inscription of Pulankurichchi and the herostones of Chengam and Dharmapuri areas are the prime sources for building the political history of the period. As corroboratory evidence the inscriptions of Gangas, Banas, Kadambas and some of the Telugu and Kannada inscriptions, for example the Halmidi inscription of Sravanabelgola area, are consulted.

The period taken for study was enriched by a stupendous growth of literature. The two great epics Chilappadikaram and Manimekalai and the Pathinenkilkkanakku works including Tirukkural belong to this period. These works cannot be ignored as irrelevant. While going through the original text of these works one can come across a lot of rich materials about the socio-cultural activities of the age.

Dynastic history of Tamil Nadu in the period between AD 300 and 600 covers the early Pallavas, the Cholas and the Pandyas. During this period Tamilagam suffered due to Kalabhra interlude. Certain minor dynasties like Muttaraiyar, Banas and Kongus were also ruling.

The first known ruler of the Pallava dynasty is one Simhavarman who is mentioned in the Manchukallu inscription and would have come to the throne in the later half of the third century AD. He should have been followed by Sivaskandavarman who issued two charters Hirahadahalli and Mayidavolu in Prakrit. The epigraphical records suggest that Sivaskandavarman would have been the son of Simhavarman of Manchakallu records. There are nearly fifteen copper plates issued by the Pallava rulers in Prakrit and Sanskrit upto the period of Simhavishnu (AD 550-590) the father of Mahendravarman. Since many of these copper plates mention the Pallava rulers in three or four successive generations as son, father, grandfather and great grandfather it was possible to arrange them in chronological order. Through a careful examination of these copper plates it has been found that Pallavas ruled either from Kanchi or from Andhrapada. As mentioned by scholars like C. Minakshi there were no two collateral branch of Pallava dynasty simultaneously ruling from two different regions. The Pallavas had shifted their head quarters from Kanchi to Andhrapada due to disturbance from Kalabhras or Cholas which are suggested by epigraphical records.

Since the genealogy of the early Pallava king is set in chronological order more or less with the support of the copper plates it has been possible to identify the particular Vishnugopan of Kanchi who was overrun by Samudragupta when he invaded south. The reference of Samudragupta's invasion of south and the defeat of Vishnugopan in the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta had been the sheet anchor to fix the date of the Pallavas. As far as Pallavas are concerned there is a continuity in genealogy with few breaks till the close of the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD.

Genealogy is lacking for Cholas in this period but still they were existing and were struggling against the Pallavas for their survival. Around fifth century the Chola country was ruled by Kochenganan who was a great warrior and had defeated his contemporary rulers like the Cheras and Kongus. Kochenganan is eulogized in the celebrated work Kalavazhi Narpadu composed by Poigayar. This king though a staunch Saivite is noted for his catholicity and toleration to other religious sects. He was the author of a particular type of temple styled as 'Madakkoil' where the vimana is raised on a plain tala. He had constructed nearly seventy such temples dedicated to both Siva and Vishnu. A few of these temples are identified and found mostly in Thanjavur – Kumbakonam belt. Some of them are renovated while others are still in a dilapidated condition.

Many theories are discussed and suggested by scholars regarding the origin of the Kalabhras. The Halmidi inscriptions prove that Kalabhras originated from Kalabapu near the region of Sravanabelgola and migrated to south towards Tamil country. Kalabhras who reached Madurai caused great havoc to the culture there. Since they were protagonists of Jainism they had destroyed the worshipping centres of the prevailing faith in Madurai. This is evident from the line in Kalladam literature. Kalabhras disturbed Kanchi

also. Kalabhras who reached the Chola country were tolerant and did not disturb the culture there. The Kalabhra ruler Achchhyuta Vikkanta of Puhar though a Buddhist was not a bigot like the Kalabhras of Pandya country. The atmosphere in the Chola country was conducive and it enabled a ruler like Kochenganan to thrive.

The feudatories like Muttaraiyar, Banas, Kongar who were holding pockets of territories as minor chieftains had played a vital role in supporting the major dynasties and were in diplomatic move to establish their position.

Monarchy was established itself in form and content during the period between AD 300 and AD 600. The king was considered as the representative of God on earth and he ruled by divine right. His will was law. The theory of kingship and the dharma to be followed by him are conceptualized in Tirukkural, which says,

முறைசெய்து காப்பாற்றும் மன்னவன் மக்கட்கு  
இறையென்று வைக்கப்படும்.

The term amaichu does not find a mention in the Sangam literature though the ministerial responsibility was taken up by elderly people. The word amaichu became familiar only in post-Sangam period. According to the Tamil epics Chilappadikaram and Manimekalai amaichar was one of the members included in the administrative group called Eimperum kulu. Ministership had become more functional and Tirukkural has codified the qualities that are essential for a minister.

Aryan influences had eroded Tamil culture and had brought forth changes in Tamil culture. Among the various groups the Brahmins enjoyed a prime position in the society since they had the knowledge of Vedas. The Brahmins who were proficient in Vedas were granted lands which were

exempted from all taxes. From the Velvikkudi copper plate it is understood that the practice of land gift to Brahmins was in vogue during the age of Sangam itself. But the term Brahmadeya which denotes the land gifted to Brahmins is found for the first time in the Pallava copper plates. Out of the fifteen copper plates issued by the Pallava rulers in this period twelve are made as Brahmadeya. Thus there was a considerable increase in the Brahmadeya lands.

Deification of a chaste woman and the rise of ‘patni cult’ is a new concept that has developed during the age. By often quoting chastity as the finest virtue for women and exalting her to the position of demi-god a restriction was brought in her behavioural pattern. The heroine of Chilappadikaram stands as the testimony to this change.

The performance of marriage became ritualistic and purohita played an important role in conducting marriage. The practice of tying tali or tirumangalya by the bridegroom around the neck of the bride was not in vogue.

Trade and commerce became active in this period. The merchant community due to their wealth were able to enjoy a respectable position in the society. Chilappadikaram and Manimekalai refer to the streets of Puhar where a variety of articles were sold in markets which included pittu and appam. Nalangadi, the day market and the Allangadi, the evening market did brisk business.

Education and learning were given prime importance and the Tamil society has never failed to recognize the learned. Knowledge of Vedas was given importance and learning them was a part of education. Learning of letters, arithmatics and grammar were important.

The students were offered facilities like books, dress and writing materials. In this context one is reminded of the Chola epigraphs found in the temples of Ennayiram, Trumukkudal and Tribhuvani which narrate in detail about the facilities offered to the students who were pursuing Vedic education in the colleges attached to these temples. Saraswati who is mentioned as Chintadevi is known to be the Goddess of education. Kancheepuram had educational centres called Katighas and it is said that Mayurasarman the Kadamba prince came to Kanchi to pursue his studies and came into encounter with the Pallava soldiers. It should be specially mentioned here that there was a book called Kalappainul that was dealing with the science of agriculture. Books on dance, painting, sculpture, cooking, medicine and astrology are specified by the literature of the period. References are scanty about the education of women. Education had a secular nature.

The period marked the heydays of Buddhism and Jainism in Tamil Nadu in the beginning. A very striking change that should be specifically noted here is the emergence of Saiva and Vaishnava sects. Bhakti movement had its beginning in this period. Some of the early Alwars who propagated Vaishnava cult also belonged to this period.

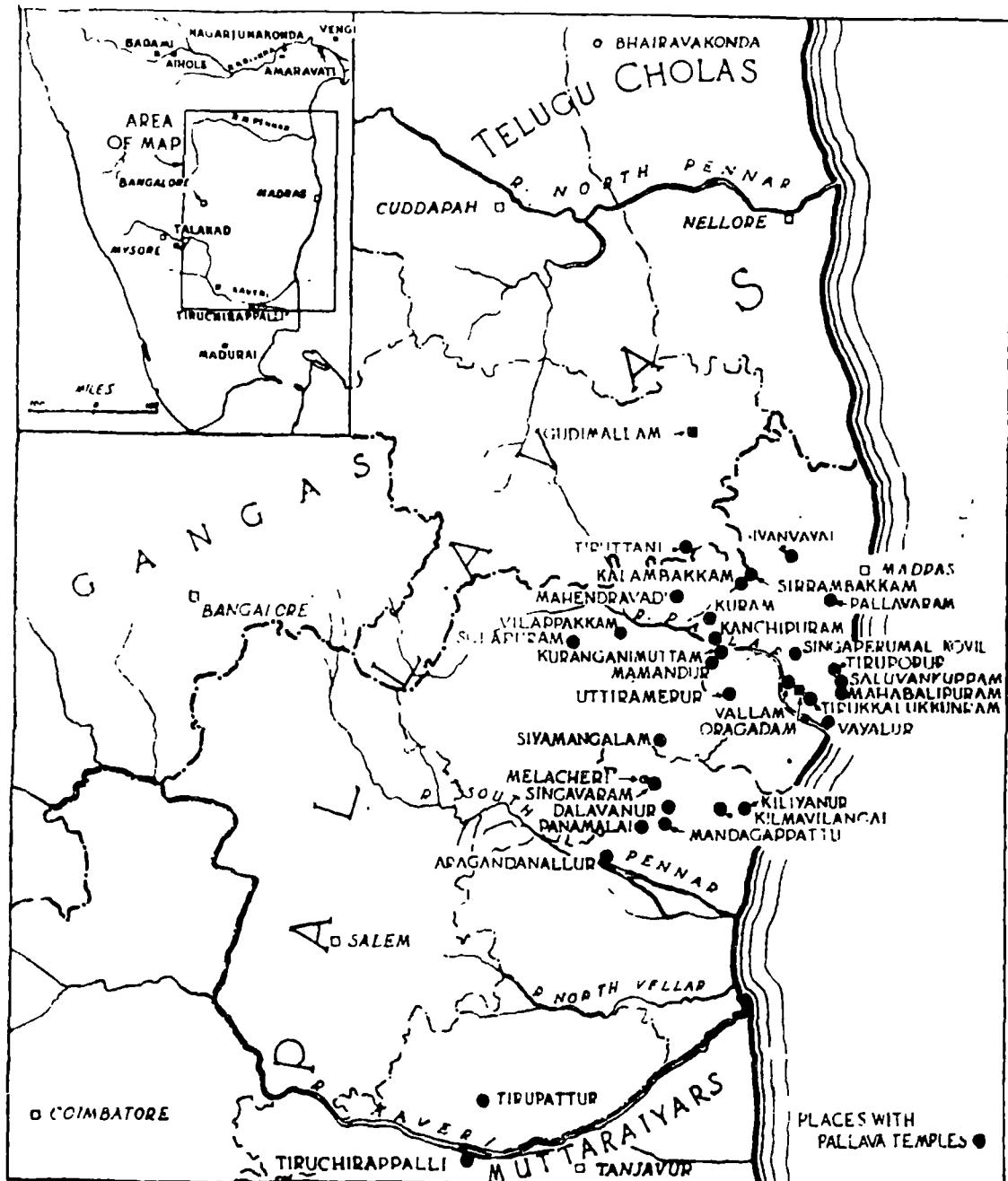
Religious fervour of the period found expression in the construction of the temples. Many architectural terms are found in the literature of the period. Kochenganan the Chola ruler of the 5<sup>th</sup> century who was devoted to Saivism had built temples both for Siva and Vishnu.

Both secular and religious architecture found growth. The age created an epoch concerning the progress of fine arts like music and dance. From the folk dance of the Sangam age, dance as an art had been perfected and had

become highly professional in this period. Chilappadikaram and Manimekalai store very rich information about these fine arts. As far as literature is concerned the period witnessed a remarkable growth since the two grand epics Chilappadikaram and Manimekalai and the world renowned didactic literature Tirukkural are the products of the age between AD 300 and AD 600.

The facts extracted from the available sources have provided very rich information about the political, social and cultural activities of the age and has proved beyond doubt that was not a dark age.

# **APPENDICES**



### *Mandagappattu: Lakshita's cave-temple (fig. 5; pls. II-III)*

**T**HE CAVE-TEMPLE ON THE HILL AT MANDAGAPPATTU, IN VILLUPURAM TALUK of South Arcot District, forms the first of the series of caves excavated by Mahēndravarman I. His inscription, in which he styles himself as a *vichitra-chitta* ('curious-minded'), calls this temple Lakshitāyatana ('the temple of Lakshita'), dedicated to the Trimūrti. 'Lakshita' was one of his many *birudas* found in his inscriptions in the Pallavaram and Tiruchirāppalli cave-temples.<sup>1</sup> The four-lined Sanskrit inscription, in the *gīti* metre, reads—

- 1 Etad-an-iṣṭakam-a-druma[m-a-lō]-  
 2 ham-a-sudham {Vichitrachi}ttēna [1\*]  
 3 nirmāṇitan-nṛipē[na] Brāhm-E-  
 4 śvara-Vishnu-Lakshmi āyatanam [11\*]

'This brickless, timberless, metalless and mortarless mansion of Lakshita was caused to be made by king Vichitrachitta for Brahīnā, Isvara and Vishṇu'?

The temple is called an *āyatana*, dedicated to the Hindu Trinity, and is one of the very few such known examples. It is significant to note that Mahēndra dedicated his first cave-temple to the Trinity, most of his other cave-temples being Śaivite and a few others Vaishnavite.

The inscription is a very important record in that it gives us definite evidence of the authorship and date of the first rock-cut Pallava-cave-temple. In view of this, Jouveau-Dubreuil's attribution of some cave-temples to Simhavishnu<sup>3</sup> may not be correct. Since Mahēndra (Vichitrachitta) himself says that avoiding the perishable material of brick, timber, mortar and metal (used till his times for the construction of temples), he excavated this cave-temple for the Trinity in enduring stone, this must be deemed to be the first cave-temple in the south, excavated when he was a devotee of Śiva, Vishnu and Brahmā.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *South Indian Inscriptions*, XII, Nos. 8 and 13; *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy*, nos. 41 of 1904 and 369 of 1908.

\* The inscription has been edited by T. A. Gopinatha Rao in *Epigraphia Indica*, XVII, pp. 14-17. He and other subsequent writers have overlooked the significance of the word *Lakshityatana* and thus missed the name of the cave. See also *South Indian Inscriptions*, XII, no. 12, and *Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy*, no. 56 of 1905.

<sup>3</sup> *Pallava Antiquities*, I (London, 1916), p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> The attribution of the Śittanāvāśal cave-temple to Mahēndra and its excavation in his earlier days when he was supposed to be a Jaina, according to a later tradition, will thus need revision. If, as some believe, that Mahēndra spent his earlier days as a prince in the Telugu part of the Pallava country, north of Tondai-maṇḍalam, perhaps as an administrator, it would not be reasonable to suppose that he went all the way beyond the southernmost limits of the Pallava territory, south of the Kāvēri into the Pāṇḍya country, to excavate his first cave-temple as a Jaina.

### Appendix III

#### **List of Mahendravarman Caves**

I Following eight caves are attributed to Mahendravarman I on epigraphical evidences.

1. Lakshidianam at Mandagappattu
2. Satrumallesvaralayam at Dalavanur
3. Mahendravishnugriham at Mahendravadi
4. Avanibhajana Pallavesvaragriham at Siyamangalam
5. Vasantesvaram at Vallam
6. Lalitankura Pallavesvaragriham at Tiruchirappalli
7. Cave at Pallavaram
8. Cave at Mamandur

II Following caves are attributed to Mahendravarman I on stylistic ground.

9. Caves at Mamandur (3 in number)
10. Kalamandakam at Kuranganilmuttam
11. Panchapandava cave at Vilappakkam
12. Cave at Arangandanallur
13. Caves at Vallam (2 in number)



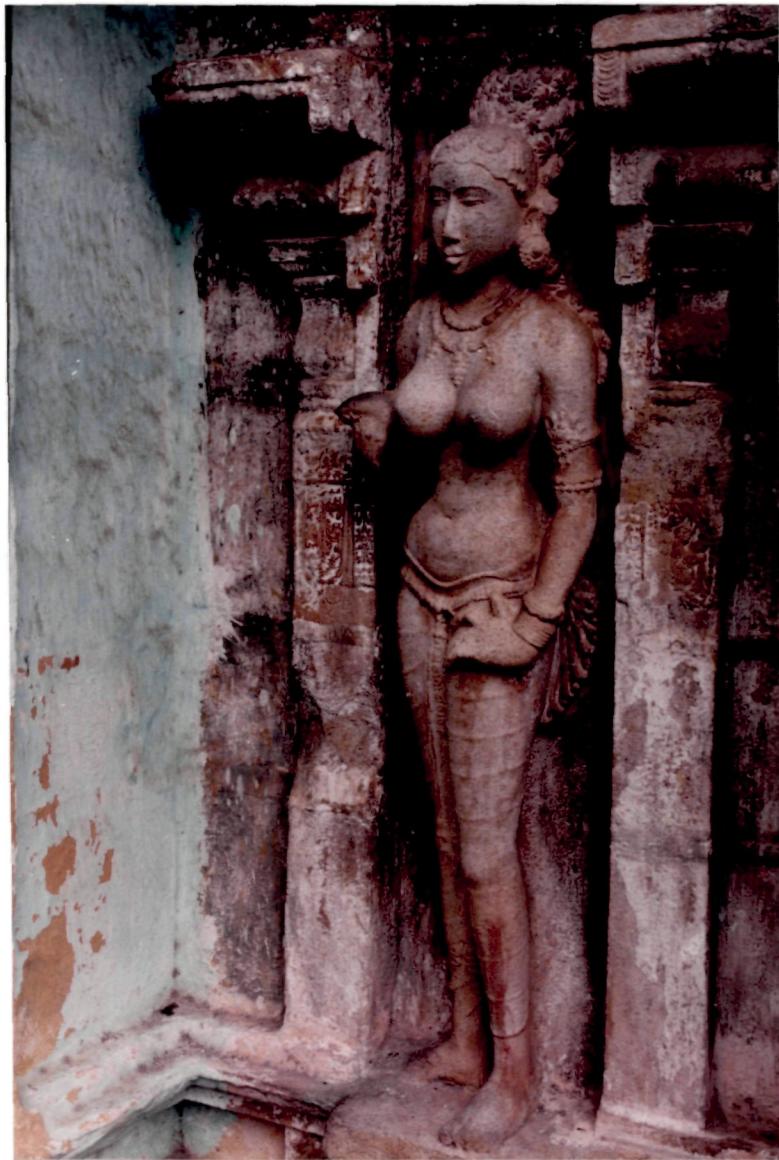
Madakkoil at Nallur



Madakkoil at Nallur



Madakkoil at Nallur



A Chola prince in Kudanthai Kil Kottam

## Appendix V

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